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THE FAMILY OF
SUNNYBROW:

A TALE
OF VICTORIOUS VIRTUE AND
VANQUISHED VICE.

By J. B.



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ANDREWS AND CO.
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P R E F A C E.

IF my little story should be found entertaining, some readers, perchance, will wish that it had been longer. If, on the other hand, it should prove dull in the perusal, few, in that case, will be disposed to impute its shortness as a fault.

But, whatever be the merits of this book, regarded as a tale, its object is not exclusively to amuse. It would aim (though by means of a fictitious example only) to illustrate the great truth, that a firm and unswerving adherence to right principle will, in general, compass even its worldly ends more successfully than the most consummate arts of a dishonest and unscrupulous policy.

J. B.



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THE FAMILY OF SUNNYBROW.

ERRATA.

Page 31, line 10, *for* 'these' *read* 'those'.

Page 47, line 3, *for* 'come' *read* 'came'.

Page 71, line 8, *for* 'sir''' *read* 'sir'.

Page 91, line 11, *for* 'estabment' *read* 'establishment'.

Page 104, line 22, *for* 'perpretator' *read* 'perpetrator'.

rejoinder. "There she is, coming across the
yonder. Look !—And she sees us too."

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THE FAMILY OF SUNNYBROW.

CHAPTER I.

THE TRAGEDY.



It was towards the close of an autumnal day—the 31st of October—in the year 18**, that two figures, to wit, a middle-aged, or perhaps somewhat elderly, gentleman in clerical costume, and a little boy numbering apparently some nine or ten years, whose hand he held within his own, might be seen emerging from the offices of a solicitor, in one of the principal thoroughfares of York.

“Now, use your young eyes, Phil; look about, and try if you can see anything of Mrs. Smyth; she must have finished her marketing, and ought to be here by this time, I think.”

So spake the elder person to his youthful companion, as they now regained the pavement.

“Oh, yes, papa, there she is,” was the quick rejoinder. “There she is, coming across the bridge yonder. Look!—And she sees us too.”

"Here, my boy," continued the first speaker, who (I may inform the reader) was the Rev. John Gauntlett, Rector of Littlegate, a country village situate at the distance of a few miles from the ancient city,—“here, my boy, hold my gloves for a moment, while I tie this a little better.”

So saying, the reverend gentleman took from the inside pocket of his great-coat a seemingly well-filled money-bag, which, after making it additionally secure by means of a piece of strong twine, he then replaced as before.

“Has Mr. Walker given you all that money for nothing, papa? Oh, what a nice, kind gentleman he must be!” innocently exclaimed the lad.

“Given me it for nothing?—Not he!” laughed Mr. Gauntlett, amused at the little fellow’s childish simplicity. “No, my boy; it is the purchase-money of a piece of property,—those cottages, you know, which—; but you don’t understand anything about such matters, my dear.”

“I wish I had as much money as that bag holds, papa,” resumed the child, after a short silence. “How happy I should be! Wouldn’t I go and buy such lots of fine things! I would—”

“Nonsense! my dear child,” interrupted the father. “Don’t talk in that way. You don’t know what you are saying. Money does not

make people happy. Sometimes it makes people very miserable. You will find that out by the time you are as old as your papa. But here comes my cousin. Well, she has made all her purchases at last; and I am glad of it; because we ought to be back at the rectory, if possible, before it is very late;—there are seven long miles for us to go; and it is now almost dark. Come, Formosa, come along; let us have the horse put to immediately; I want to get home.”

The few words of conversation which had just passed between Mr. Gauntlett and his little son, and which I have reported, were exchanged quite carelessly, and without the least suspicion of their having been overheard by any one. Just at this moment, however, and before the reverend gentleman had quite finished his last sentences, two young men, who had been smoking their cigars together at the street-corner hard by, were now to be seen slowly sauntering away towards the opposite side of the road.

“It’s What’s-his-name, isn’t it? old *Skin-flint* of Littlegate?” asked one of them.

“Aye, aye; but hush! not so loud, man,” replied the other, as he hastily drew his companion’s arm through his own.

One of these two was a tall, well-proportioned,

commanding youth, neatly and tastefully, not to say gaily and showily, dressed ; and his general appearance, which was that of a young gentleman, might have had the effect perhaps of prepossessing one somewhat in his favour, were it not that dissipation had too evidently begun to write its traces on his yet beardless cheek. There was a gracelessness in his air and expression, and something daring and devil-may-care more especially in the cast of his eye, which a close inspection could not fail to detect. Still, to a casual and superficial observer, he might not probably have passed for anything worse than a jolly fellow, who could sing a song and tell a tale, and swear an oath or two ; in short, who could boast all the qualifications necessary for a pot-companion at a tavern, except, perhaps, an eagerness to contribute his quota towards the reckoning.

His friend, who seemed to be his senior by a few years, was himself also a tall figure, or at least above the middle-height. Beyond that, however, the resemblance between them did not greatly extend. This individual was evidently a man of commoner mould and of a meaner stamp. A certain clownishness of look, an awkward slouching gait, together with some untidiness, as well as shabbiness of apparel, sufficiently excluded the

supposition of any great amount of gentility in the person whom they characterised. Save that his complexion might easily be seen to be sallow, and his features, the nose especially, to be sharp and prominent, it was scarcely possible to make any very satisfactory study of his physiognomy. The thick folds of a woollen muffler at once protected his throat and concealed the lower portion of his face ; while the broad flap of a felt hat, which surmounted his head, served somewhat darkly to overshadow his brows. So far as a passing glance could penetrate, there did not appear to be anything unusually interesting or pleasing or striking in his facial development. Had he been in any special manner favoured by nature, it is possible he might not have deemed it necessary to veil his attractions so closely and so jealously from the public gaze.

The pair, after joining a third person, who had been beckoning to them across the street, remained for a few moments standing and whispering together in earnest conference. They then turned their steps rapidly, and disappeared from view amid the windings of a narrow alley.

Meanwhile our more reputable-looking acquaintances from Littlegate had ordered their conveyance at the *Golden Lion*, and were preparing for their departure homewards.

As they pursue their journey along one of those straight, flat, monotonous, unsuggestive turnpike-roads for which the county of Yorkshire has ever been celebrated, I would avail myself of the opportunity thus afforded by the absence of every object and circumstance of interest, to introduce Mr. Gauntlett and his companions to the reader's somewhat better acquaintance.

Mr. Gauntlett had held during a long course of years the small living of Littlegate, to which he had been originally presented by the University of Cambridge, on his attaining seniority among the fellows of his college. For learning and scholarship he enjoyed a long-established reputation; and it needed but a brief acquaintance with him to discover that he was a person of the most highly refined tastes, and of the truest gentlemanly feelings. In addition to this (and what was of yet more essential importance to one in his position), he was a man of sincere and earnest piety, and one whose chief interest and delight were ever found in the exercises and in the works of religion. The extreme sweetness of his natural disposition, the truly Christian temper which he failed not to manifest on every occasion, his zealous, unremitting attention to the duties of his pastoral charge, his habitual courtesy and affability, and last, though,

perhaps, not least, the open-handed liberality with which he dispensed his worldly means in relief of their necessities whom poverty or misfortune rendered the objects of his charity;—these and other admirable properties justly deserved for him, as they served effectually to win towards him, the respect and affection of all with whom he was brought in contact. The parishioners of Littlegate were indeed much to be envied on account of their excellent pastor.

The reverend gentleman, being somewhat deficient in stature, and having, moreover, contracted a slight stoop, would not perhaps (according to the strict interpretation of the term) be reckoned *handsome*; yet he might well claim to be distinguished by what would appear, in reality, the truest style of personal beauty. His frank, open countenance was singularly expressive; and not one of its finely moulded features but was the pleasing reflection of those moral and intellectual graces which so richly adorned the noble nature that lay concealed beneath it.

Mr. Gauntlett (it remains to be added) was a widower. Some years previously it had been his happy lot to lead to the altar the youthful daughter of a wealthy and influential Irish nobleman. This amiable and accomplished lady, however, after a

sufficiently brief taste of the sweets of connubial bliss, fell a victim to the attack of an epidemic disorder, under the malignant influence of which her somewhat delicate and slender strength eventually succumbed. From the shock of this crushing bereavement Mr. Gauntlett had scarcely been able fully to recover himself at the period when our history commences. The sole pledge of his short-lived union with the Lady Philippa was the young boy, who has already to some extent come before the reader's notice.

Phil Gauntlett, who was an active, quick child, and who inherited many fine qualities from both parents, had now, since his mother's lamented death, become (as was very natural he should) the one, all-absorbing object of his father's affectionate interest and solicitude. Such moments of leisure as he could find for himself in each day, consistently with a due discharge of his more public duties, these the good rector took pleasure in devoting to the instruction and training of his little son; and it may suffice here to say further that the lad's gradual advancement and improvement ere long became such as in an abundant measure to repay the fond parental care so anxiously bestowed at once upon the cultivation of his mental powers, and the formation of his moral character.

It only remains now that I should put the reader in possession of one or two brief particulars relative to the lady who was accompanying Mr. Gauntlett and his son in their return to Littlegate.

The Honourable Mrs. Smyth was the relict of an Indian officer of that name, who had recently lost his life in the service of his country. On the decease of her husband she at once returned to England, and took up her residence at a suburban villa in the immediate vicinity of York, in which city her only child, a little daughter, was to receive her education. It was the frequent habit of Mrs. Smyth to come and stay at Littlegate rectory with Mr. Gauntlett, with whom she was connected as being the cousin of his late wife ; and she was now paying one of her customary visits to her relative at the date of our present tale. I may add that Mrs. Smyth, not only through the Colonel, but in her own right also, was possessed of a considerable fortune.

And now, after this short notice of the principal persons so far concerned, we may again resume the thread of our narrative. Mr. Gauntlett had driven several miles on his way home and had now reached a small road-side hostelry, commonly known by the name of the '*Half-way House*,' when he observed a hackney-coach standing there

in front of the door. The driver was at that moment engaged in supplying draughts of water to his horses, from whose smoking and panting sides it was evident that they had but recently been undergoing more than usually severe exercise. Passing closely by, Mr. Gauntlett easily, by the aid of the light which proceeded from a lamp suspended over the doorway, recognised in the man a familiar acquaintance. He was an old groom who belonged to the stable-yard of one of the York hotels, at which the reverend gentleman not infrequently put up his conveyance, when business brought him into town.

"Hollo ! Richards," exclaimed Mr. Gauntlett, as he pulled up quickly, "is that you ?"

"Hollo !" was the answer, "hollo !—Oh, Mr. Gauntlett, I beg your pardon, sir; didn't quite know your voice at first; wasn't exactly expecting you; hope you're quite well, sir."

"Quite well, I thank you," returned the rector; "but one doesn't often see you out this way, Richards; what brings you here to-night?"

"No, sir, don't often trouble this road; only a chance time nows and thens."

"Who's your fare, Richards?" inquired Mr. Gauntlett.

"Sure I don't know them, sir; three gents

from the town of some sort ; on very important business seemingly ; you should have seen the way they had me drive ; just look at them horses ; but don't know them at all, sir ; strangers in these parts, I think ; stopped here a bit since, and not coming back to-night ; orders is to call for them to-morrow early ;—but this is late for you to be abroad, Mr. Gauntlett ; and no lamps, too ; why, bless me, sir, you'll never can see to get home."

" Oh yes, Richards ; never fear ; I know every inch of this road by heart ; and if I didn't, the horse does ; we'll soon be at home now ; good night, Richards."

" Good night, sir."

And now the two conveyances sped away from each other in opposite directions.

The rector's vehicle had proceeded at a tolerably brisk pace for about three-quarters of a mile, when a somewhat unlooked-for opposition was suddenly made to its progress onward. Three figures, well concealed by the thickening darkness, had just now emerged from behind a heap of stones, and had managed to steal up alongside of the approaching phaeton, before any of its occupants were sensible of their presence. Two of the above, arresting the rein and fore-part of the


shaft, adroitly contrived in an instant to turn the horse's head against the embankment of the hedge which skirted the roadside; while, in the same moment of time, the other, springing upon the step from the opposite quarter, aimed a powerful blow with a life-preserver at the head of Mr. Gauntlett. That gentleman, not entirely disabled by the stroke, which lighted on his shoulder, had the address immediately to grasp his assailant, and was indeed likely to succeed in wresting the weapon from his hand, when the latter, presenting a pistol which he held in reserve, fired,—and missed. The shot, however, although it failed to take effect where it was intended, was yet not altogether spent in vain. It struck the lady who occupied the other seat on the further side of Mr. Gauntlett! Uttering a sharp cry of agony, she sank heavily down against the splash-board. Meanwhile Mr. Gauntlett had so far prevailed in the struggle which he still continued manfully to maintain, as to have at length compelled his brutal antagonist to drop both his weapons, one after the other, upon the road; and it is not improbable that '*old Skinflint*' (as the reverend gentleman had with small reverence recently been styled) might (seeing that he was a man of strong sinew and nerve) have ultimately succeeded in proving

himself more than a match for the enemy, had not the other two ruffians, who had been hitherto busied in securing the horse to a post, now promptly come to their comrade's assistance. Uniting their efforts, they experienced no great difficulty in over-mastering any resistance which could be offered by the poor clergyman; and they had presently succeeded, by the help of one or two additional blows of the life-preserver, in laying him senseless upon the path. This effected, they then proceeded to rifle his pockets of any valuables which might be there contained. And now, after having duly secured all the expected booty, they lost no time in decamping, with what speed they could, across the country.

Mr. Gauntlett's little son had been throughout a silent, passive spectator of the above most shocking and revolting scene. He sat there, in the back seat of the phaeton, transfixed with amazement and petrified with horror. Fortunately, by favour of the darkness, he could clearly distinguish but little of what was being transacted, save once only, when a sudden gleam of moonlight, penetrating through the thick clouds, afforded him a momentary view of *one* of the barbarous wretches, as they bent over and laid their plundering hands upon the prostrate form of his dear father.

When they had been some time gone, and all was left still and quiet, he then at length began to be aroused into thought and feeling and life; and by slow degrees he came to realise the dreadful nature of the situation in which he was placed. With loud sobs and screams he now ran along the highway, terrified and well-nigh frantic, in the direction of a homestead, the evening lights of which glimmered faintly in the distance. Arrived there, he told, as well as his agitation permitted, his fearful tale. The good people of the farm at once hurried to the rescue, and assisted in conveying the carriage of Mr. Gauntlett, together with its unfortunate occupants, to the rectory of Littlegate. Restoratives were, without delay, applied to the persons of the injured lady and gentleman, but in the case of the former altogether ineffectually. Life was already quite extinct. Poor Mrs. Smyth had bled to death. The lead had passed into her neck, tearing open a large blood-vessel. Mr. Gauntlett, although much bruised and shattered, as the reader can well imagine, was yet sufficiently recovered in the course of two or three days to be able to leave his bed.

The particulars of what succeeded the above most terrible event—the scenes of grief and woe which naturally ensued, need not be dwelt upon.



It is enough to say that the remains of the murdered lady were in due course of time laid in the churchyard of Littlegate. The ball, which had been extracted from her throat by the surgeon, was found, on examination, to be an ordinary pistol-bullet, *but with a sharp, jagged, little excrescence on one side of it.* It was preserved in the family as a melancholy and dire memorial of the tragedy to which it had been instrumental.

The police authorities were, of course, duly engaged to track the perpetrators of this atrocious crime; and a very large sum of money was publicly offered as a reward to any one who could supply such information as might lead to their apprehension. The miscreants, however, had succeeded in making good their escape from the locality before proper inquiry and search had time to be instituted; and, notwithstanding the persevering efforts used during a space of many months, they remained unheard of.

Possibly it may be our fortune to hear something of them in the course of the pages that follow.

CHAPTER II.

A YOUNG LADY MAKES HER APPEARANCE.



THE bodily injuries which Mr. Gauntlett had sustained in his recent encounter were of the severest character, and such as, to one of an inferior constitution, might possibly have proved even fatal. The reverend gentleman, however, was a man of strong physical frame ; so that, by the aid (in the first instance) of the highest medical skill, coupled with careful nursing, and succeeded by a sufficient period of rest and change, he had ere very long regained his usual state of health.

But let it not be supposed that the effects which the tragic occurrence of the last chapter could not fail to produce on his mind and spirits, admitted of any so speedy removal.

It has already been noticed that the comparatively recent death of the Lady Philippa had cast a shade and gloom over the life of Mr.

Gauntlett, which the lapse of years had not as yet succeeded in dissipating. It can well therefore be conceived that the shock occasioned to his mind by this new calamity, following so closely upon the former one, and embittered to him, moreover, by circumstances so harrowing in their nature, could not be very transient in its duration; the more so still, when it is further recollected that, in now losing his cousin, Mr. Gauntlett lost one who had become specially dear to him through her relationship to his beloved wife. It could be no matter of wonder, therefore, if this last melancholy event proved serious in its effects upon the already depressed spirit of the rector of Littlegate.

Mr. Gauntlett now passed a much greater portion of his time than before in the solitude of his library; and when he occasionally appeared in company, it was with an abstracted air and a reservedness of manner which had hitherto been foreign to him. He attended, indeed, as regularly and carefully as ever to the duties of his sacred office: yet there was throughout an evident lack of that energy and vigour which had formerly been the characteristic of his ministrations. The hearty cheerfulness especially, with which he used to mix among his humble flock, and which

had won so many of the simple rustics towards him, was now sadly missing; and grave fears were beginning to be entertained lest he, who had so often brought joy and gladness to the distressed and comfortless spirits of others, might be himself falling under the influence of a settled and resolute melancholy. This, however, was (happily) not destined so to be; and a pleasing little event which took place about this time and which brought with it a small, though not unimportant, addition to his domestic establishment, was perhaps the first thing which served to arouse the good rector somewhat from his mental dejection. I refer to the arrival at Littlegate of a young lady, who was henceforth to find her home under Mr. Gauntlett's roof.

Ellen Smyth was the only child of the Honourable Mrs. Smyth, the circumstances of whose untimely death have been made known to the reader. Deprived of the parental care and protection, she became now dependent upon Mr. Gauntlett, her appointed guardian during her minority. On her coming of age, she was the fortunate inheritress of the very large and handsome properties which had belonged to her mother. This young heiress, then, shortly after the mournful event of the preceding chapter, and in conse-

quence of it, came and took up her abode in the rectory of Littlegate.

Ellen, who had completed her ninth year, was a beautiful young creature, with rosy cheeks and blue eyes and flaxen ringlets ; and, if there was anything which could surpass the prettiness of her face, it could only be the extreme loveliness of her disposition. A more charming and engaging child it would scarcely have been possible to imagine. Her natural vivacity and sprightliness rendered her a most suitable and valuable companion to Mr. Gauntlett under his present circumstances. And, as though sensible of this himself, he did not fail to take advantage of each opportunity of her enlivening and cheering society. It was no small enjoyment and refreshment to him, in the intervals of pastoral work and study, to accompany her in her rambles, and listen to, and share, her innocent mirth.

Now, there could be little doubt that the accession of this bright, fairy spirit to Mr. Gauntlett's sorrow-darkened family circle tended, not merely in the way of pleasing diversion, but by adding another to the number of his graver cares and responsibilities, to withdraw that gentleman (more effectually than any artificial remedy which could

have been prescribed) from the influence of those morbid sentiments and feelings, in the indulgence of which he had of late been too freely and too contentedly allowing himself.

It would have been very much in accordance with Mr. Gauntlett's own personal feelings and inclinations to have himself superintended the work of his youthful ward's education; and indeed, at the time of her first becoming an inmate of Littlegate rectory, he had actually conceived the idea, and in some measure, come to the determination of combining this pleasing task of Ellen's instruction with his other duties.

On subsequent reflexion, however, he could not avoid feeling constrained somewhat to question the expediency of such a course. Whatever might be the advantages of a permanent continuance under the *parental* care and rule,—(for it was in *this* relation that Mr. Gauntlett regarded himself as now standing towards his little cousin)—it yet occurred to him that the isolation, thus involved, from all companions of her own age and sex might not prove altogether beneficial to the young lady. He was sufficiently wise to be able to discern that the monotony of an uneventful life at home, conjoined with the absence and loss of all that wholesome discipline and expe-

rience undergone and acquired during a progress through the little world of school, must militate in no slight degree, in the case of young persons, at once against their enlargement of mind and their growth in character. Allowing himself, therefore, to view matters under this aspect, and also dispossessing himself of any selfish feeling which might have led him to prefer retaining his ward's companionship, Mr. Gauntlett finally decided to carry out her mother's original purpose with regard to her education. He arranged that on the commencement of the next-ensuing half-year she should be placed in a seminary for young ladies, at such a convenient distance from the rectory of Littlegate as would permit of her paying an occasional visit to her guardian. In taking this step Mr. Gauntlett, no doubt, acted judiciously, and for the best interests of her who had been entrusted to his charge.

The reader will pardon me, I trust, if, before concluding this somewhat quiet and unsensational chapter, I cannot forbear a remark upon the mistaken, and indeed, I would even say, *cruel* kindness of those parents who, under the notion of *keeping their children out of harm's way*, would deprive them also of those undoubted advantages which the companionship of their fellows and

equals has a tendency to confer, committing thereby an injustice towards, and inflicting an injury upon, their progeny, which they may live to repent and deplore without living to repair.

The principle on which this spurious sort of parental affection and solicitude proceeds, is clearly one the fallacy of which but a slender acquaintance with human nature and experience of human affairs may well suffice to detect. It consists in the ignorant assumption that, in proportion as the world of men is withdrawn from, the contact of evil also is escaped ! Surely, the truth is that a world of evil, the seeds of all moral vice, are already present and inherent in each individual (be he located or immured where he may), and, moreover, are ready and prompt without foreign aid to develope themselves into positive wrongdoing, and indeed are certain, in one form or other, to do so presently, save only for the restraints of divine grace ; consequently, that the vices of those who have chosen to separate themselves from the rest of humankind are not necessarily fewer or of less magnitude, but (generally) only *other* than and different from *their* vices who have not taken the same precaution against the contaminating influences of their fellowmen !

I only add that, even within my own limited

experience, I have met with numbers of men and women who have never extended their travels or intercourse with the world further than the street or hamlet in which they were born, and yet whose acquaintance with evil, and assiduity in the practice of it, might fairly bear comparison with the polluted morals of any whose misfortune it has ever been to make the circuit of the globe, and to observe human society in all its phases !

CHAPTER III.

MR. JOB HUNTER.

WE now proceed to make acquaintance with a very different personage from any of the inmates of Littlegate rectory.

Mr. Job Hunter was the son and heir of a country apothecary, who enjoyed an extensive and flourishing practice in the pottery-districts of Staffordshire. It had always been his father's wish and intention that he should succeed to him in a profession (so far as he himself had exercised it) at once lucrative and honourable. This paternal project and arrangement, apparently so advantageous, was, however, destined to become frustrate, owing to certain serious disqualifications in the person mainly interested in it. With these it will be my business to acquaint the reader in the present chapter.

Job Hunter was a well-favoured, comely-looking youth, and one, too, who wanted not for

natural parts and abilities. These, indeed, he possessed in no mere average degree; and had but the goodness of his heart been such as to match the quickness of his head and the smartness of his exterior, he could hardly have failed to prove at once a useful and ornamental addition to society. That such, however, was not the case, a brief and cursory review of his earlier years will sufficiently manifest. To begin, then, at the very beginning:—Master Job had not lived very long in the world before he proceeded to make his choice between good and evil; and it was with some little concern and dismay that persons observed on which side his marked preference lay. His cradle-life, with its squallings and kickings and plungings, may be passed over in silence, and the interesting and pleasing details left to the reader's imagination. Admitted into the nursery, he lost no time in establishing himself as the torment of his little sisters, and the constant terror of his governess. It appeared to be his special mission to create inconvenience and annoyance, and it may truly be said that he most earnestly and most faithfully discharged it. He wore the air of being ever on the anxious watch for some opportunity of working mischief, and he rarely looked so contented and happy as when in the

commission of some forbidden act of disobedience. Wanton destruction of property seemed, of all things, the most to his taste, and productive to him of the greatest amount of gratification. It was his mother, I think, who related to me the infinite delight with which he came running forth one day and exclaimed (in reference to an operation he had just been performing upon certain foreign bulbs which had come as a present from the Squire's lady, and which had been bestowed for safety in the recesses of a closet): "See, nurse, see! I have been peeling Aunt Julia's onions!" And I myself well remember, on another occasion, the vexation and towering displeasure of his grandmamma who, being suddenly called from home on most urgent business, was nevertheless compelled to delay her departure for twenty-four hours, in consequence of his having (exactly at the moment of the stage-coach's arrival to take her up) severed with a pair of scissors all the cords and strings which secured her boxes, and also sunk her cloth travelling-boots into the bottom of a water-jug.

These, however, and many others that might be instanced, were but the thoughtless tricks and foolish pranks of childhood; and it was reasonably believed by all that Master Job needed but

to grow older in order to his becoming wiser. Neither the reasonableness, however, nor the universality of such a hope was sufficient to secure it from disappointment. For passing onward, we find that our young friend's subsequent school-life abounded as little in promise of eventual good as did the preceding years of infancy. Here, not only were his indisposition to learn and his disregard of discipline the matter of daily complaint ; but his remarkable propensity to mischief was now in such perpetual exercise, and was attended, moreover, in many cases, by such inconvenient consequences, that it as greatly tried and taxed the patience of his masters to be able to endure, as it baffled all their skill to know how to reform, his faults. The issue was, not uncommonly, that, failing reproof and castigation to produce the effect desired, it became necessary to bring the annoyances connected with his presence at school to an abrupt termination, by the quiet transfer of him into the custody and care of his relatives. After his school education was completed, or rather (to speak the truth more accurately) after he had been expelled from a greater number of schools than was creditable to himself or calculated to reflect honour upon his family, Mr. Hunter determined to lose no time in putting an effectual and

final check upon the waywardness and folly of his son, by binding him apprentice to the steady and serious duties of his own profession. The volatility and levity, however, of Master Job's disposition were not destined to be so readily extinguished. It was not very long before he gave evidences of as small an aptitude for business as formerly for study. The new sphere of action, indeed, in which he was now placed, seemed rather to furnish him with increased facilities, and still greater and higher occasions than before of indulging his natural love of fun and mischievous sport. Of these one may be sure he was not slow to take advantage. The whimsical manner in which he compounded drugs, and tampered with and improved upon medical prescriptions, and experimented on those simpler cases which occasionally were entrusted to his management, thereby jeopardising the lives of many of his father's patients, speedily struck that gentleman with no small consternation and dismay, and drove him to the unwelcome conclusion that the sooner his long-cherished purpose of retiring in favour of his present assistant was abandoned, the better it might be for the interests of more persons than one. Dispensing, therefore, with his somewhat questionable services in the surgery, Mr. Hunter

allowed the lad to remain unemployed at home for the present, while he himself took due time for reflection as to what might be the most advantageous course to pursue in regard to him.

Meanwhile, while his father was thus anxiously thinking of his welfare, Master Job was pretty actively engaged in the acquirement of those vicious habits which were calculated to ensure his ruin. Being left in a great measure to himself and his own resources, he naturally sought such companions as were suited to his years and tastes; and he had no difficulty in finding many who were pleased to have the honour and benefit of his acquaintance, and by whose advice he was easily persuaded to enter into scenes of dissipation and licentiousness. The result was that, before many months had elapsed, he had become fairly embarked in courses from which, when once habitual, it is not so easy to withdraw as to continue in them. The irregularities of his conduct, which could not long be disguised, and which now began to occasion much grief and unhappiness to the minds of his parents, were met in the first-instance by kind and affectionate remonstrance, afterwards, when good words proved unavailing, by a somewhat severer species of treatment. The abridgment of his pocket-money, together with the deprivation

of numerous other means of enjoyment—his exclusion from parties of pleasure, or even from the family circle itself, not to say occasional imprisonment in the solitude of his chamber—these and similar modes of punishment served usually, not indeed to reclaim the reckless youth, but yet to mark the parental disapprobation of his immoral and disgraceful practices. And on not a few occasions, when the lad's misconduct had been especially provoking to him, Mr. Hunter even resorted to the infliction of bodily chastisement—a sort of correction which, however well merited and however suited to the nature of the offences committed, is yet perhaps always a somewhat hazardous experiment in the case of a young man closely verging on maturity.

Such for some time continued to be the unsatisfactory relations between Master Job Hunter and the members of his family. An important change, however, was impending—and such a change, also, as will scarcely be admitted as an improvement. It arose out of a little circumstance which I will briefly relate. It so happened on one occasion that Master Job delayed returning to the parental roof until an unusually advanced period of the night, and his father and mother, weary of sitting up in expectation of him, had now betaken

themselves to rest. On the house being at length disturbed by his loud and continued peals on the door-bell, Mr. Hunter rose, in no very tranquil humour, to give him admittance. And he was on the point of doing so, when it suddenly occurred to his mind that a night of exposure to the cold and other inclemencies of the present wintry season might prove a wholesome discipline for his son, and serve, as effectually as anything else, to give him a distaste for, and abhorrence of, these late and unlawful hours, which he persisted in keeping not more to his own discredit than to his family's discomfort. Acting, therefore, upon this happy thought, he first roughly informed the lad that 'since he did not choose to come home in proper time, he might find a lodging where he could,' and then, with a furious bang, shut the door again in his face.

"This will cure him, I expect," he said to himself with a grim smile of satisfaction, as he now resought his warm and comfortable pillow.

Skilful and successful as Mr. Hunter was universally allowed to be in the treatment of physical and bodily disease, he had yet somewhat miscalculated the effects likely to be produced by the above remedy, so felicitously pitched upon, for the moral distempers of his son. And this he dis-

covered, to his no small mortification and remorse, no later than the following day. The fact is that Master Job, already sufficiently impatient of the restraints of home and chafing in spirit under the somewhat rigorous treatment to which he had recently been subjected, needed but the additional exasperation caused by this last and crowning measure of severity to determine himself to that fatal step, which was now destined finally to decide, and permanently to fix, the character of his future life.

Leaving his home, without the ceremony of a farewell, he immediately turned his steps in the direction of London, in which place he conceived that his natural talents (of which he had already begun to be conscious) might enable him at once to gain a livelihood and to live agreeably to his inclinations. As he pursued his way towards the great metropolis, it was his fortune to overtake a small band of strolling players and musicians, with whom his genial manner and sparkling conversation (during the course of a pleasant evening spent at a country inn) had speedily the effect of ingratiating him, and with whom, on his being invited and pressed to do so, he not very reluctantly consented for the present to associate himself.

In company with these, his new acquaintances, he visited several of the provincial towns and adjacent hamlets; and in the performances there given, night by night, he had learned ere long to sustain his part very creditably and successfully; and indeed (of such high and rare order were the powers which he gradually discovered in every department of stage-acting—tragedy and pantomime alike) it presently became the secret conviction of the entire company that in Mr. Job Hunter they had gained a most valuable and desirable addition to their number, and one whose services, if they could be retained, were calculated to bring no small amount of grist to the mill; and it was more than once encouragingly observed to that young gentleman by some of his friends that ‘*were he only to continue his connection with them sufficiently long to arrive at anything like a proficiency in the dramatic art, there was no reason whatever to despair of his making one day a very tolerable figure, if not a very decided sensation, even upon the London boards!*’

The wandering, irregular life which Mr. Job Hunter had thus begun to lead, together with the low companionships he had now formed, however congenial to his tastes, could not tend very greatly to the improvement of his morals. If there were

any vices from which he had hitherto been free, but which he was anxious to possess, it must be confessed that he could not have come to a better school for their speedy acquirement than the caravan of a travelling theatre; and that now, at least, if not at an earlier period of his education, he showed himself an apt scholar, is perhaps equally certain.

Such funds as were needful to him for his support and maintenance he experienced no great difficulty in raising, when he chose, occasionally, to render his services upon the stage. But what he found it easy to get, he had still more facility in getting rid of; so that, being at once extravagant and indolent, he was, very generally, in a somewhat low financial condition—not infrequently in considerable pecuniary embarrassment. Nor was he, on such occasions, always over-scrupulous as to the manner in which he would seek to relieve the difficulties of his situation. Indeed, when foul means of righting himself and his affairs appeared more convenient and came more readily to his hand than fair ones, he did not (if the truth must be spoken) often hesitate long before making use of them. It will be only fair, however, to our young friend to add that probably he might not have made so rapid progress in the school of

vice but for the influence exerted over him by one of his reprobate associates—an Irishman of the name of Logan, a man considerably older than himself, and who had not only been long notorious for the profligacy of his habits and the lawlessness of his practices, but had even on one or two occasions narrowly escaped paying the penalty of his crimes upon the scaffold.

But I have already, in this lengthy chapter, exhausted the reader's patience, and I would not now prolong the present sketch unnecessarily. Suffice it to say that such as above depicted was the character into which Mr. Job Hunter had grown, and such the mode of life which he had begun to follow but a short time previously to the date of our story.

CHAPTER IV.

CHANGES.



TEN years or more had now rolled away since the events recorded in the three foregoing chapters. And with time had come its changes. The parish of Littlegate had lost its worthy and respected clergyman; although not (I am pleased to be able to add) by the stroke of death. Mr. Gauntlett, having begun, somewhat prematurely perhaps, to experience the infirmities of advancing age, and his health, moreover, having betrayed not a few unmistakable symptoms of decline, had felt compelled ultimately to relinquish the charge of a parish the duties of which, owing to a rapid increase in the population, were becoming unusually laborious, and to seek some sphere of duty which might be better proportioned to his strength. And he had now, not very long before the present date, accepted the vicarage of Sunny-

brow, a small village in the county of Middlesex, some six or seven miles distant from town. Sunnybrow was a purely rural district, and its population of the most simple and homely character. Inasmuch as the proprietors of the soil had their residences elsewhere, the parson had always himself been the squire; while the remaining aristocracy of the neighbourhood consisted in a small number of very respectable tenant-farmers, who thought it no disgrace to till the ground with their own hands, and who, in respect of worldly means, were generally what is termed 'well-to-do,' or, at least, quite as great strangers to poverty as to affluence. Beyond the above, there was no person of any consideration or importance in the place, unless it were Dr. Gargle, the village apothecary, or a certain Mr. Makepeace who, although an attorney by profession, was yet content to live, for the most part, in retirement and obscurity upon his private income, partly (no doubt) from not having any very strong inclination to follow the duties of a calling unnecessary to him, and partly also, perhaps, because the particular locality in which he resided afforded him but few and trifling occasions of bringing his professional skill into operation. In truth, the farmers of Sunnybrow, like farmers everywhere else, were men of

tolerable shrewdness, and preferred, when any difference arose between them and their neighbours, losing a portion of their substance, by leaving the matter unsettled, to losing the whole of what they had, by obtaining the settlement desired through the powerful intervention of the law. Such, then, was the quiet, little retreat in which Mr. Gauntlett purposed to pass the evening of his days.

It is further to be mentioned here, with regard to that gentleman, that, in consequence of the death of a distant relation, he had recently come into possession of a small estate in the north of England, and that, in connection with this increase of worldly fortune, he had been required to assume henceforth the name of '*Rose*,' in addition to his former one of '*Gauntlett*.'

I now hasten briefly to inform the reader how it had been faring meanwhile with the other members of Mr. Rose's little circle.

His son, Philip, had completed his educational course at one of the public schools, and was now applying his mind to the special studies connected with engineering, which, after due consideration and with the full approbation of his family, he had decided should be his future profession. Philip Gauntlett (or, as he came now generally to be

named, after his father, and as it will be most convenient for us also to name him from this point, Philip Rose) had made good use of the years that had passed over his head, and had improved much in every way, physically, mentally, and morally alike, since the time when he was last brought before our notice ; and he had now grown up into a fine, noble young man, of some nineteen or twenty years of age.

His cousin Ellen, also, had advanced (the reader may feel sure) in equal proportion. She, too, had arrived at a not-uninteresting period of life ; and I shall perhaps sufficiently sum up her manifold attractions by briefly describing her as at once talented, beautiful, and good. Upon her quitting school, Mr. Rose, anxious that his young ward's education should be rendered as complete as possible, and reflecting that a short sojourn abroad could not fail to be advantageous to her in many ways, had not immediately received her back into the vicarage, but had committed her to the care of his sister, who kindly took her to Paris ; and, after remaining with her there for more than a year, invited her for a short time to her own home in London, previously to her returning to her guardian and taking up her permanent residence at Sunnybrow.

I ought not (I think) to end the present chapter without referring to a little circumstance which about this time had come under the observation and engaged the attention of Mr. Rose, and which, from the fact of its being somewhat closely connected with the interests of both the young persons for whose welfare he still felt himself responsible, so far from appearing unimportant in his eyes, was indeed beginning to occasion him some little anxiety and uneasiness of mind. Perhaps I shall scarcely find a readier and better mode of conveying to the reader that which I have to communicate than by reporting part of a conversation which passed one evening between the vicar and his son in the library.

"By the bye, Phil," said Mr. Rose, "speaking of Ellen, there was something I was going to say to you in reference to her."

"Yes, father; well?" returned Philip, looking all attention.

"She's a very nice, pleasant young lady, is Ellen, isn't she?" continued Mr. Rose, with a sly glance.

"To be sure she is," was the rejoinder; "certainly; but what of that? that wasn't what you were going to say, was it?"

"Yes, that was *part* of it," said Mr. Rose; "I

wonder now whether you could guess the remainder, Phil ?”

“Nay, not I ; what can you possibly mean ?” answered Philip, with an appearance of astonishment.

“Eh ?” said Mr. Rose, with a most comical expression.

Philip coloured slightly, as he replied : “I don’t understand you at all, father ; tell me all about it.”

“Have you really no idea, now, what I was going to say to you ?” asked Mr. Rose.

“Not the least ; not the very remotest,” said Philip ; “how should I ?”

There was something in his face, however, which seemed to indicate that he was not altogether without suspicion of what was coming !

“Ah ! Phil,” said Mr. Rose ; “well, never mind ; I will explain myself. You are a little attracted (are you not ?) in a certain quarter ? Your feelings (I mean) are not altogether those of indifference towards your pretty cousin ? Come, Phil.”

“Well, father,” answered Philip, with some confusion, “if that is what you think, I can only say that there is nothing for you to alarm yourself about ; nothing whatever in the world.”

"My dear Phil," said Mr. Rose, "I did not expect to be *alarmed* by anything that might be revealed to me; only (supposing the state of matters to be as I imagined), there was perhaps reason why I should feel some degree of anxiety on the subject. It is very certain that you have of late discovered a somewhat more tender interest in Ellen than is usually required to express a mere brotherly regard. Not only have I been able to observe this myself, but others, also, have hinted as much to me."

"I can assure you, father," interrupted Philip, "that there is really nothing between us at all."

"Nothing between you! No, I dare say not; not at this moment at least. But remember that the advances of a certain sentiment are sometimes very subtle and not always perceived, or even intended, by the person indulging it. Now, are you sure that there might not be 'something between you' (as you term it) before very much more time has elapsed? What say you, Phil?"

"I am sure I don't know; but even if there should, what then? where would be the harm in it?"

"I do not know that there would be *absolutely any harm in it*; yet perhaps there might be some doubt as to the *fitness of such a thing under*

present circumstances. And this *fitness under present circumstances* was just the point which I was desirous of talking over with you."


"Very well, father," answered Philip pleasantly; "I shall be happy to hear all you have to say with regard to this most serious affair."

"I am quite sure, Phil, that, if what I say to you should appear designed to act as a check upon your present inclinations, you know me sufficiently well to attribute this only to my solicitude for your real interests."

Philip assented.

"Well now, Phil," proceeded Mr. Rose, "I have no objection whatever to own this much to you, that if, after you have, both of you, lived a little longer in the world and entered somewhat more into society, there should *then* begin to spring up between you and your cousin anything in the shape of a mutual attachment, I should probably, for my part, be very far from desiring to discourage or cast a damp upon your wishes; because, from my intimate knowledge of both your characters, I should strongly incline to believe you well adapted to promote each other's happiness. But, though I freely grant this, yet I feel that there are certain considerations which at present demand not to be lost sight of. You

are doubtless aware that your cousin is not only a very wealthy heiress, but also that she is highly and nobly connected through both her deceased parents. Such external advantages plainly entitle her to find a partner (if she is so minded) in a rank of life somewhat superior to our own. Now, you know, Phil, that, in addition to my parental feelings of anxiety for your interests, I have also a duty towards my ward; and I feel sure that you yourself could not but secretly disapprove, were I to allow the indulgence of the former to interfere with the faithful discharge of the latter. The question is, then (when we consider what one in Ellen's position has a right to expect), whether I should not be guilty of some injustice towards our cousin, were I to consent to her affections being thus early engaged by you, before she has had the opportunity of at least rejecting other proposals which might be made to her. In so acting, I should scarcely, I think, be allowing her that fair chance (so to speak) which she deserves to have. I do not lay so much stress upon the circumstance of her high family-connection, seeing that you yourself, through your mother, possess an almost equal advantage in that respect. Still this circumstance, taken in conjunction with such magnificent pecuniary prospects as Ellen



has before her, would seem calculated to secure for her a very much more distinguished alliance than she would gain by becoming plain Mrs. Philip Rose! Whether Ellen might herself care to claim all the distinctions of worldly position, to which her circumstances would seem to justify her aspiring, I cannot say. Very possibly not. But this, of course, in no way affects the present question. There is yet another light in which I must briefly put this matter before you, Phil. You know (I presume) that what you will ultimately inherit from me is not very considerable, and therefore that for fortune you will need mainly to depend on your own exertions. Although I entertain little doubt of your speedy advancement, yet it must necessarily be some time, I think, before professional success could bring you into the possession and enjoyment of anything like an ample income. Now, in the meantime, while your means are but slight and your prospects only uncertain, would you appear to fair advantage (think you?) as the eager aspirant to the hand of a young lady who is worth a hundred thousand pounds, and who has not yet had the opportunity of becoming known outside of our small circle? Might not the circumstance of your suit be made the subject of remark and comment such as it would

little gratify you to hear, should it reach your ears? Might not persons be apt (and that, too, not unreasonably) to ascribe unworthy motives, and to suggest that it was the purse as much as the person of Miss Smyth that you were anxious to secure? And if this might be thought and said of you, might not as bad, or rather worse, be believed of *me*, the supposed encourager, perhaps counsellor, of your addresses? It is very true that we might both, in such case, be influenced by none but the purest and most unworldly views; yet is society always charitable in its judgments and surmises? No, my dear Phil, it will be expedient, for the sake of all parties, carefully to avoid here even the appearance of evil. As there can be no greater disgrace to *any* man than *actually to be* a fortune-hunter, so can there be no greater misfortune (I conceive) to any man of integrity than to acquire the reputation, or even lie under the suspicion, of being such. I have now sufficiently expressed to you, Phil, my views on this subject; and, for the result, I think I may safely trust to your own good judgment and taste, and to your high appreciation of what is just and honourable."

Philip Rose was indeed the very soul of honour and high principle; and it is enough here to state

briefly that, on perceiving (as he was not slow to do) the exceeding justice of his father's remarks, he at once came to the noble decision that for the present time his love to Ellen must lie deep-buried in the recesses of his inmost breast; while he yet gladly retained the hope that the day might come ere long, when the concealment of his sentiments would be no longer a duty.

CHAPTER V.

MR. THURLOW.



SUNNYBROW, being a picturesque and salubrious neighbourhood, and withal situate within an easy distance of town, afforded, occasionally, a welcome retreat to many persons whose professional engagements detained them, for the larger portion of their time, in the city of smoke and fog. During the more genial months of the year especially, it was no unusual thing for single gentlemen, or even small families, to content themselves with such humble and scanty accommodation as our little village could yield, for the sake of enjoying, for a season, the compensating benefits of unpolluted air and rural tranquillity.

Among the strangers, whom the above object led to visit Sunnjbrow one early summer, was a certain Mr. Thurlow. This gentleman engaged a small, though not uncomfortable, lodging at one

extremity of the village, to which, after being absent in town during part of the day, he ordinarily returned of an evening. Mr. Thurlow was a man in the prime of life, being, to all appearance, scarcely over thirty years of age. He was what would be generally esteemed good-looking, and of somewhat pleasing address. At the same time, except when he spoke or when a smile passed over his features, there was a seriousness and pensiveness, almost amounting to gloom, discernible for the most part in his expression and manner. This, associated as it was with some degree of taciturnity, served to create the impression that there might be some secret grief which was trying him and weighing heavily upon his spirit. And this supposition derived much probability from the peculiar fashion of his dress. For, in addition to a full suit of black, he wore also a mourning ring, while a crape of some depth encircled his hat. The presence of these outward trappings of woe left little room to doubt that Mr. Thurlow's seeming dejection was the consequence of some recent family bereavement.

Some little time after the arrival of our new acquaintance at Sunnybrow, the worthy vicar, having repeatedly, while officiating in the church on Sundays, been attracted by a strange figure in a pew

at some little distance, and wondering who the individual might be whose attendance was so constant, observed to the old sexton one evening, after coming from the pulpit:—"Lazarus, I have noticed a strange gentleman pretty regularly at church during the last few weeks. Do you know who he is? I should be glad if you would learn his name and any other particulars you can gain respecting him; as I should wish to make his acquaintance, if he has come to reside in the parish."

"Yes, sir," was the answer, "I have seen him and had a word with him once or twice; and only this morning he was asking me if he could get a seat for himself in one of those front pews. He is likely to be stopping in the village for some time, he says. He's a merchant of some kind, I believe, and goes to town whiles, during the week. They call him Thurlow; and he has Dame Peekle's two rooms. He's a very nice, quiet sort of gentleman, seemingly; and I took the liberty of saying that, if he would wait after the service, you would likely speak to him yourself about the sitting."

"Oh, very good, Lazarus; then he is here now, I suppose; perhaps you will ask him to step into the vestry at once."

Mr. Thurlow was hereupon introduced. The

vicar, bowing politely, received him, and begged him to take a seat. After one or two commonplace observations had been exchanged between the two gentlemen, the special business of their interview was then entered upon; and it was presently arranged that a certain convenient sitting should be appropriated to Mr. Thurlow's use during the period of his sojourn at Sunnybrow. The latter now rose to withdraw.

"I have much pleasure, sir, in welcoming you to my parish," said the vicar, who had been somewhat favourably impressed by the modest, unassuming manners of Mr. Thurlow, "and I trust to have an early opportunity of coming and paying my respects to you."

"Oh, thank you, sir," returned Mr. Thurlow, "I am extremely obliged to you. I fear, however, that it may be necessary for you to seek me in the evening, as my business usually takes me into London during the day-time. Good evening, sir, and many thanks," he then added, as he retired from the vestry.

About a week or ten days after their meeting at the church, Mr. Rose, in fulfilment of his promise, took occasion, one evening after tea, to step along to Mr. Thurlow's lodgings. That gentleman had just then returned home, and was divest-

ing himself of his *paletot* and other articles of out-door costume.

"I trust I am not inconveniencing you, sir, by calling at this moment," said the vicar, as he entered the sitting-apartment.

"Oh, not in the least degree, sir; pray, come in and sit down," returned Mr. Thurlow, as he now warmly shook Mr. Rose's proffered hand. "Your visit is indeed very acceptable; one feels the evening a little long sometimes without company; and I am quite a stranger here at present, you know, and have not yet had the opportunity of making acquaintances."

"You will find this place somewhat quiet and dull, I dare say, but still an agreeable change from the din and bustle of London."

"Oh, very much so, sir; and I trust ere long to derive benefit from my sojourn in the country. I have been somewhat out of order and out of spirits of late. The truth is I have had a good deal to harass me during the last few months, and I now stand in need of a little rest and refreshment."

"Ah, yes; quite so," answered Mr. Rose; "the constant anxieties of business-life have a natural tendency to strain and wear the spirit, and, indeed, render an occasional respite almost indispensable."

"It was not so much to my business that I was referring," returned Mr. Thurlow, "as to—as—as—"

"Ah, yes," said the vicar, taking him up, "I perceive what you would say; you have, I fear, met with some domestic trouble; I had noticed that you wore deep mourning."

"Yes, sir," replied Mr. Thurlow, with down-cast looks, "it is indeed a heavy sorrow that has recently fallen on my little home. It is only a few weeks since I lost my poor, dear wife, after a painful and protracted illness."

"Oh, dear, dear!" interposed the good vicar, sighing.

"And you can imagine, sir, that my spirits are sadly prostrated at present under the stroke of this most grievous calamity."

"That is only natural," said Mr. Rose. "When the mind and feelings have been subjected to a violent shock, it ever needs some little interval to elapse, before nature can regain her former balance."

"Ah, yes, sir; one can only wait and endure till time begins to work its salutary effect. Time is ever the great soother—indeed the only effectual healer in such cases."

"True," said Mr. Rose; "and yet perhaps it is

not on the healing efficacy of *time* that we ought to rely *solely*. Doubtless, it is from above that we must ever expect the greatest and surest alleviation of our distresses here below. I should trust, Mr. Thurlow, that you are able to comprehend my meaning, and that you are not without an experience of the consoling power of religion under your present bereavement."

"Ah, yes, sir," replied Mr. Thurlow; "you are quite right, and I thank you for correcting me. I should have expressed myself differently. I spoke without reflection at the moment. I am well aware, sir, that there is but one true source of comfort to the afflicted soul; and it is to that, above all, that I strive now to look."

"That is indeed well," responded the vicar. "Have you a little family, Mr. Thurlow (if I may ask), to lament with you their mother's loss?"

"No, sir," was the reply; "we had been married but some six or seven months, when it pleased Heaven to—to—"

Mr. Thurlow's emotion here impeded his utterance, and the sentence remained incomplete.

"I do most sincerely sympathise with your severe affliction, my dear friend," said Mr. Rose, kindly pressing the hand of the poor mourner; "and I am well able to do this, having myself

been called on to endure severe trials more than once in the course of my life. I am also a widower, like yourself."

"Indeed, sir, indeed!" was the murmured reply.

"Yes; oh, yes," said the vicar, sadly pondering on the past. "But," he added presently, rousing himself, "it is not good to dwell too long on painful themes. Let us speak now of other matters, Mr. Thurlow. It has been gratifying to me to observe your interest in our little services here. You are a church-man, I dare say?"

"Oh, yes, sir; a staunch church-man, as both my parents were before me. I have been carefully brought up in the Church of England from my childhood; and I feel truly attached to my church and her institutions and formularies. Where shall we find anything to compare with our Book of Common Prayer, that noble liturgy in which it is our privilege to join Sunday by Sunday?"

"Aye, where, indeed?" said the vicar. "And yet how many persons there are who seem but little alive to its excellencies and beauties! It is perhaps too solid food (if I may use the expression) for the digestion of the average worshipper; or rather, perhaps, it presupposes a depth of religious character beyond that of the generality.

At any rate, owing to some defect or other, our people seem to require educating into a due sympathy with it and appreciation of it; and this (I conceive) should form no small part of the clergyman's task in his intercourse with his flock."

Mr. Thurlow readily assented to these observations. "What you say, sir, is very just; and indeed the matter has frequently presented itself to my own mind in quite a similar light."

The conversation had been pursued in this strain for some little time longer, when Mr. Rose, looking at his watch, found that the evening was further advanced than he had supposed.

"I shall be happy, sir," he said, as he now shook Mr. Thurlow's hand in parting, "to pay you an occasional visit during your evenings, if perfectly convenient to you."

"Oh, by all means, sir," replied Mr. Thurlow; "I shall be only too glad and thankful to enjoy an hour's conversation with you whenever you have leisure. Indeed, I shall take it very kindly, if you will compassionate my solitude and look in upon me in this friendly way."

The vicar now took his departure, not a little pleased at the addition which had been recently made to the small church of Sunnybrow, in the person of Mr. Thurlow.

On joining his little family-party, shortly afterwards, at the supper-table, he recounted the particulars of his recent interview with his new parishioner. "It is gratifying and cheering," he said, "to feel that one has the sympathy of any of the more influential members of the congregation. This gentleman, besides being a well-wisher to religious work, is doubtless in a position to further it in other ways still more effectual; and it is not improbable that, should he continue here for any length of time, I may find him of valuable assistance to me in the carrying out of certain parochial projects."

"Aye, father," said Philip, "you must get him to pull you through the difficulty in regard to these new schools."

"Who knows how long he may be here?" put in Ellen. "There is little dependence to be placed on these occasional visitors. They come and go, like birds of passage. The place is far too quiet and stupid for the most of them to stay very long. They find the charms of the country but slight compensation for the loss of all the gaieties they are accustomed to in town. And very likely this Mr. Thurlow may not see any greater inducement to prolong his stay at Sunnybrow than others before him have done."

Mr. Rose was about to observe something in reply, when the entrance of the servants, for the usual family prayer, now precluded any further continuation of the subject.

CHAPTER VI.

A GLIMPSE OF A FORMER FACE.



HERE is one principal actor in our little drama who has been left out of view somewhat longer, I fear, than is consistent with his importance, and whose reappearance, therefore (for a brief recognition), may not perhaps be altogether unwelcome. The reader (I can well imagine) is by this time all anxiety to hear of any improvement which the lapse of years may have prevailed to effect in the character, or in the fortunes, of our early acquaintance Mr. Job Hunter. It will be the object of the present chapter to satisfy this reasonable curiosity.

The scene to which we are now about to be introduced, calls us back (in point of time) to a date slightly anterior to the occurrences related in the immediately foregoing pages.

In an inferior-looking apartment on the lower

landing of a small lodging-house, not far distant from Covent Garden Theatre, there might be seen, one fine spring morning, seated on a low chair in front of the hearth, a middle-aged person of shabby-genteel appearance, and of a somewhat vulgar and almost repulsive cast of countenance. The chamber, of which he was at present the sole occupant, was a dusky, dingy little box of a place, but indifferently lighted, and yet more indifferently furnished. Its tenant, however, seemed one whom the poverty and meanness of his external accommodations and equipments could not hinder from the enjoyment of a tolerable amount of personal ease and comfort. His head supported by a cushion, his feet crossed upon the mantel-piece, and the tube of a long *hookah* fixed between his lips, he had been for some time not unpleasantly engaged in the perusal of a volume of modern plays. As he continued thus quietly and harmlessly indulging himself, a quick step was suddenly heard in the adjoining passage, and, the moment after, a smart, well-dressed young man had entered the room, without the previous formality of knocking at the door. Our friend, turning his head, nodded, and resumed his reading.

"I say, Jack," said the incomer, stepping up alongside of him and slapping a hand upon his

shoulder, "what do you think? I never had such rare luck in my whole life! I've seen her again this morning! Yes, and I've found out something, too!"

"Eh, what's that you say?" returned the other, now looking up and putting his book to one side. "You've seen the angel again, have you? Well?"

"Well," repeated the youth (whom the reader has already conjectured to be Mr. Job Hunter); "and is that all you have to say to one in the way of congratulation? Why, man alive! she's the most divine creature under the canopy of heaven—an absolute goddess! nothing less, I declare. Well, I had followed her into a sort of fancy bazaar, and was just preparing for an agreeable little flirtation, when, rather inopportunately, that ancient beldame, that keeps guard over and watches her with the eyes of Argus, suddenly made her appearance. This stopped everything, of course. However, I have managed to ascertain one or two important particulars: firstly, where she lives—St. John's Wood; secondly, and better still, perhaps—she has money of her own, and plenty of it. What do you think of that, Mr. John Daws?"

"Nonsense!" said the other abstractedly. He was longing to return to his volume.

"It's a fact, sir. But, I say, Jack, do attend to me. Put that stupid book away for five minutes, can't you? That's right. Now, look here. Don't you see what a glorious chance here is for a poor fellow like me? If I could only get to the blind side of that charming damsel, why, bless your heart, I should be *made*! Think of a thousand or two a year, and nothing to do but amuse oneself!"

"Fiddle-de-dee! fiddle-de-dee!" said the man of shabby-genteel appearance, now again essaying to read.

"I tell you what it is, Jack," continued Mr. Job Hunter, "I am pretty nearly tired of all this quill-driving, mountebanking, etc., etc., in order to secure the necessaries of life. This slaving existence doesn't seem to agree with my constitution, somehow. There is no doubt that I shall be obliged to give it over before long. Now, I really have a good mind to try my fortune in this interesting quarter, do you know! My appearance, to commence with, is a trifle in my favour, though it ill becomes me to say so, perhaps; and I think (between ourselves) that I understand tolerably well how to employ the blarney. Due tact and proper management and plenty of assurance are all that's necessary. Depend upon it, these qualities

(with average good luck) must carry the thing through successfully. They can't fail. Therefore, my dear Jack, the long and the short of the matter is this: My resolution is taken to win that girl, or to perish in the attempt."

"What stuff you are talking, boy!" exclaimed Mr. Daws, impatiently.

"I'm not talking stuff at all," said the other. "I've made up my mind to go in for it; yes, and to go through with it, too, at all hazards—neck or nothing. 'Faint heart never won fair lady,' you know."

"You're going to make a precious fool of yourself, I expect," was the somewhat gruff rejoinder. "Leave the girl alone, you simpleton, and don't meddle with her. You'll only get your fingers burnt, take my word for it, now."

"Well, Mr. Daws, I have no doubt that I shall be able before long to report satisfactory progress to you. Meanwhile, as you are not inclined to be sociable just at present, I will take the liberty of leaving you to the enjoyment of your own reflections. Good morning."

So saying, Mr. Job Hunter lighted his cigar between the bars of the fire-grate and straightway made his exit.

Leaving that young gentleman to prosecute his

matrimonial schemes with what success he might, I now hasten to record a small circumstance which was destined ultimately to affect the interests (in a greater or less degree) of nearly every person-age whom I have so far introduced to the reader's acquaintance. And this it will be proper to make the subject of a separate chapter.

CHAPTER VII.

THE BULLET-MOULD.



R. PHILIP ROSE, after he had completed his professional studies, obtained in due course of time a suitable appointment as engineer to certain public works. The duties of his position rendered it necessary that he should now remove from the quiet village of Sunnybrow (where he had recently been staying under his father's roof), and take up his residence in one of the busiest quarters of the metropolis. His lodgings were in the immediate vicinity of Temple Bar.

As he returned home one evening from a visit to a friend at some distance, it so happened that his shortest and most convenient course lay through a great portion of the Edgeware Road. He entered this accordingly, but had not proceeded many steps, when he was suddenly overtaken by a violent shower of rain, which (inasmuch

as he was unprovided with an umbrella) threatened presently to drench him to the skin. Under these circumstances, he gladly sought a temporary shelter within the doorway of a somewhat humble dwelling, which occupied a corner of the street. "Won't you walk in, sir, and take a seat by the stove, till the storm is over?" said a young woman with an infant at her breast. "Pray, come in, sir."

"Oh, thank you; you are very good," returned Mr. Rose, as he now entered and availed himself of the chair placed for him in front of the fire. "Come here, my little fellows," he called to two male children who had timidly slunk away into a corner, on the entrance of their visitor; "come here, my little men; you needn't be afraid of me. Fine lads, ma'am," he added to the mother, as he now patted them upon the head. "Yours, I suppose?"

"Yes, indeed, sir," was the young woman's reply; "both mine, I am sorry to say."

These words, spoken as they were with some bitterness of tone, naturally occasioned no slight degree of surprise to the mind of Mr. Rose.

"Sorry, my good woman?" he exclaimed. "Why so? These young children can have done nothing, surely, to grieve you, at their tender age!"

"Oh, no, sir; not *that*; but—Oh, never mind, sir; never mind."

Mr. Rose perceived that there was some painful topic present to her thoughts, into which he did not feel justified in seeking to penetrate. By way, therefore, of changing the subject, he remarked, carelessly:

"Your husband, I presume, is engaged at his work, and has not yet returned home?"

At these words the poor woman, covering her face with her hands, burst into a flood of tears! "Oh, sir," she sobbed out at length, after a few moments of unrestrained emotion, "you little know what a life—what a weary, dreary life is mine. Often do I wish that death would come and take me away from it. But this, I dare say, is wrong. I know it is, sir."

"I am indeed grieved to hear you speak thus, my poor friend," said Mr. Rose. "Will you not," he added, (his curiosity and interest being somewhat excited) "confide to me the nature of your sorrow? What is it that you find so hard to bear? Perhaps I may be able to comfort or advise you."

"Oh, no, sir," was the reply; "*that* you cannot, I am sure. But you seem a kind, feeling young gentleman, and I don't mind telling you what it is. My husband, sir, has behaved ill to me, and indeed he has left me altogether."

"Ah, dear!" said Mr. Rose, "this is very sad, very, very sad. But he will return to you perhaps. I should trust he would do so."

"Oh, no, sir, I have no expectations of that. And it would be no better for me, perhaps only worse, if he did come back. While he was with me, he led me a shocking, dreadful life. He is a bad, wicked man, sir, is my husband. I daren't tell you how bad and wicked a man he is."

"Was he intemperate?" inquired Mr. Rose.

"Indeed he was, sir, but worse than that; that was nothing, I may say. Oh, sir, you have no idea what a bad man my husband is! He has been in prison several times, and I shouldn't wonder if he came to be hanged at last. I do solemnly believe he will one day. He is a terrible man, sir, is my husband!"

"How long has he been away from you?" asked Mr. Rose.

"About seven or eight months now, sir."

"And you don't know what has become of him?"

"No, sir. And—and—" (she here yielded to a fresh paroxysm of grief) "and these poor, dear children have no one to support them but myself; and I am only a weakly creature."

"Ah, it is hard—cruel," said Mr. Rose. "And

you are not able to do much for your little family, I dare say?"

"I do what I can, sir. I take in a little washing and plain sewing, when I can get it."

"I am indeed sorry for you, my poor woman," said Mr. Rose; "and I wish I could do anything to relieve you in your present trouble ("You are very kind, sir," interposed the poor creature). There is a possibility of my removing a little nearer this quarter of the town before long; and, should I do so, I will endeavour to find something in the way of employment for you myself. You would be willing to undertake the washing and repairing of my linen, perhaps, if I required a new laundress?"

"Oh, yes, sir; if you would kindly think of me, I shall feel deeply grateful."

As Philip Rose remained for a moment ruminating upon the sad case with which he had just become acquainted, it so chanced that he allowed his hand to rest on the low mantel-piece which projected from the chimney in front of him. Touching something, he raised and looked at it. *It was a bullet-mould!* As he turned it about mechanically and played with it, his eye was suddenly arrested by some peculiarity in its conformation. He found, on inspection, that the cup

CHAPTER VIII.

MR. MAKEPEACE IN CONSULTATION.

PHILIP ROSE had good reason for wishing to possess himself of the bullet-mould which he found lying on Mrs. Pilbreth's mantel-shelf. It corresponded very strikingly (so he fancied) with the fatal bullet which had many years before occasioned the death of his cousin, the Honourable Mrs. Smyth, and which was still preserved in the vicarage of Sunnybrow. Strongly suspecting that he had accidentally found an important clue to the great mystery of the murder, he lost no time (the reader can well believe) in hastening homeward, with the view of putting certainty in the place of doubt. The fact turned out to be precisely as he had anticipated. On a careful comparison of the old bullet with the newly-discovered mould, it was found that they agreed together to a hair's breadth. There could be no doubt that the bullet

had been originally cast in that particular mould and in no other. Certain little irregularities and malformations on the surface of each were sufficient to compel such a belief.


Mr. Rose, on receiving his son's communication, suggested the propriety of their taking the opinion and advice of a professional person on the subject without delay.

Accordingly, Mr. Makepeace, the village attorney, who had been already invited to dine at the vicarage that evening, was now further requested to be present at a consultation afterwards to be held in Mr. Rose's library.

While the dinner is pleasantly progressing, I may take the opportunity of furnishing the reader with one or two particulars relative to the said Mr. Makepeace, who had the honour to be the law's representative on this occasion.

Mr. Makepeace was a short, stout, elderly gentleman, with high shoulders and a round face and sharp twinkling eyes, deeply sunk into his head. In most respects he was what might be termed an 'ordinary sort of man,' and would not perhaps be entitled to any very minute description, but for one striking peculiarity which, occasionally, distinguished him. Although, in his general intercourse with others, he was ever sufficiently

communicative and outspoken, yet, let him be once appealed to in his legal capacity, from that moment he found it necessary to maintain a singular reticence. Chatty, and even loquacious, on all ordinary occasions, yet, the lawyer once assumed and legal business once entered upon, no man was ever more sparing of his words. In his consultations, he seemed to lay it down as a rule that he should never give utterance to one single syllable beyond what might be absolutely needful for the guidance and furtherance of the matter in hand. Should any information, of which he was desirous, fail to flow forth spontaneously from his clients in the course of the statements which they made to him, or should any important point in the case appear likely to be omitted or neglected, he would then probably feel himself induced to interrupt by a brief hint or interrogation; but otherwise he preferred to act the part of a listener. Rarely committing himself (in reply to inquiries made) to anything in the shape of a decided opinion, but framing his replies, for the most part, with what seemed a studied vagueness, he would, nevertheless, pay the most marked attention to everything that was said, nodding darkly or puckering his lips, from time to time, by way of acknowledgment. This *dumbness* (or doubtfulness) of



the oracles on the part of Mr. Makepeace, although perhaps not altogether satisfying, at the moment, to those who consulted him, yet tended ultimately somewhat to sustain that gentleman's credit as a professional adviser; inasmuch as—whatever the issue of the case on which he might be engaged—it never could appear that his opinion, so far as it had been elicited, was any other than the correct one; more particularly, as he had a happy manner of casually observing (afterwards) in the hearing of his triumphant or disappointed client (as the case might be):—“*Ah, yes, it was of course evident from the first how the thing must go;*” or “*Well, that, you know, was what we rather feared all along!*”

But now to proceed:—

After the duties of the dinner-table had been duly discharged, the three gentlemen, leaving Mr. Thurlow—who was also a guest on that evening—to accompany Miss Smyth into the drawing-room, proceeded to the vicar's private apartment for the purpose of conferring together on the important matter which now claimed their serious attention.

Mr. Rose (for the due information of the *legal* gentleman) made a detailed statement of all the various circumstances with which the reader has

become acquainted. He then submitted the pistol-ball, together with the mould in which it had been cast, to Mr. Makepeace for his own personal inspection.

The latter, drawing near to the light of the lamp which occupied the centre of the table, examined the two articles and compared them carefully for some minutes in silence.

"Well?" said the vicar; "well, sir?"

"Well, sir," said Mr. Makepeace, who had resumed his seat and was gazing thoughtfully into the fire in front of him. "Well, sir," he said, looking up slightly.

"You have now the whole case before you, sir," said the vicar; "there is nothing further, I think, to state, of any importance."

"No?" replied Mr. Makepeace. "That is the whole case, then? There is nothing further, you say?"

"That is all, sir," said Mr. Rose. "What, now, is your view, Mr. Makepeace? What should be our step, do you think?"

"That is just the point, sir," answered the professional man. "That is, of course, what one would wish to take into due consideration."

Here Mr. Makepeace, closing his eyes and leaning back in his chair, assumed an air of deep re-

flection. He seemed to be duly considering what he should advise.

After he had considered in this way so long that it occurred to his companions that he might possibly be asleep, Philip Rose, whose patience was beginning to be exhausted, remarked somewhat abruptly: "Well, surely, Mr. Makepeace, we have got something that may serve us as a clue! There can be no doubt of that, I suppose?"

"Why, no," answered the lawyer, as he reopened his eyes and raised them in the direction of the speaker. "No."

"So far as it goes, I mean," said Philip.

"Exactly. So far as it goes, of course," said Mr. Makepeace.

"You don't consider it goes very far, perhaps?" added Philip.

"Why, that depends, you see," said Mr. Makepeace, in a slow, deliberate tone.

"What do you mean depends? How?" interrogated Philip.

"Everything," said Mr. Makepeace.

"Well, I must confess," said the vicar, "for my part, I do not think that our clue, so far at least, amounts to very much. Even allowing this poor woman's husband to have been the actual perpetrator of the crime, who knows where he is to be

found? He has deserted his home, and has not since been even heard of."

"To be sure," said Mr. Makepeace, gravely.

"But, of course," continued Mr. Rose, "the guilt of this man Pilbreth is only a supposition."

("Nothing more, of course," interposed Mr. Makepeace.)

"The bullet-mould may easily have been the property of some other person at the date of the murder; or, at any rate, the ball cast in it may have been used by some one else. I am afraid little or nothing could be established from our present evidence alone. Eh, Mr. Makepeace?"

"It would seem so," returned that gentleman.

"No doubt the discovery of this bullet-mould (pursued the vicar) would be of infinite importance, were there anything in the shape of concurrent proof that we could associate with it. This appears to be what we now want."

"We can do nothing without proof, sir," said Mr. Makepeace, with a severe contraction of his eyebrows; "nothing."

"The great awkwardness of the matter (observed Philip) is that one cannot at present trace the man's whereabouts."

"Ah," said Mr. Makepeace, "bad, bad. That hinders investigation, you see, materially."

"All that we can do then, I suppose," continued Philip, "is quietly to wait in the hope that something further will transpire?"

"Just so," returned the lawyer, "just so."

"Meanwhile," added the vicar, "this woman, Ann Pilbreth, must not, I think, be lost sight of. Supposing her husband to have been connected with this dreadful crime, she is more likely than any one else to be able to furnish the information that would lead to his capture."

"At the same time," said Philip, "now that he has deserted her, there is not much probability of his coming where she would have the chance of meeting with him or even hearing of him. He will keep himself well out of her reach, you may be sure."

"All that is very true, Phil," answered Mr. Rose; "but might she not be able to refer us to some of his former associates? and might we not, by their guidance, succeed in tracking him to his present place of retreat?"


"Aye, to be sure; I should have thought of that," said the young man. "She must be turned to some account, if possible."

"Now, you will look to this Mrs. Pilbreth, sir?" said Mr. Makepeace, addressing Philip. "You will pump everything out of her that is to be

known ? Keep her constantly in view and within reach ; for *she is our only chance*. Yes. Well now, gentlemen, as this affair has been ventilated and settled as far as it can be at present, you will perhaps excuse my further attendance, as the hour is late. Should anything arise or come to light, you may rely upon the matter receiving my best attention. Good evening."

"What a stupid man Mr. Makepeace is!" said Philip, after the lawyer had made his bow and retired from the room. "I fear he will be of no great use to us."

"Well, I don't know that, Phil," replied Mr. Rose. "I am not so sure of that. Mr. Makepeace is certainly very reserved in consultation ; but I incline to ascribe that rather to an excessive cautiousness than to any lack of intelligence or ability. I have known many professional men with the same peculiarity, though not perhaps to the same extent altogether. The general impression in regard to Mr. Makepeace is that, notwithstanding much that is unpromising about him at first sight, he may be depended on as a safe lawyer in the long run. I am not aware of his having ever mismanaged or neglected a case entrusted to him, and I rather imagine he is a tolerable master of his business."



"Well, but he hardly ever opened his mouth, for the purpose of counselling anything at least, the whole evening!"

"Exactly; that is his great peculiarity," said Mr. Rose. "He never does say anything till it becomes absolutely necessary that he should interfere; and then he says briefly just as much as the case may require and no more. When he spoke at the last, you will recollect, it was exactly to the purpose. He seemed to be thoroughly alive to the one circumstance of importance for us in the whole case. With regard to his silence *otherwise*, it does not appear to me that there was any view of matters for him to put forward, beyond what had already been suggested and observed upon by one or the other of us. On the whole, Phil, I think we may repose confidence in our friend Mr. Makepeace. I know him better than you do."

CHAPTER IX.

THE VICAR'S RIGHT-HAND MAN.



ABOVE a year had now elapsed since Mr. Thurlow's arrival at Sunnybrow, and that gentleman was still a resident in the village, and seemed likely, moreover, to continue such. The fine, bracing air of the locality, together with the refreshing intercourse with nature, seemed to have exercised a beneficial influence upon him in every way; so that not only was his bodily health now fully re-established, but his mind and spirits also had emerged from their unhappy depression and recovered their wonted elasticity. Mr. Thurlow had also recently found himself in a position to retire from the activities of business-life. Owing (it was understood) to the prosperity and success of certain large mining speculations, in which he had had an interest, such an addition was now made to his private means as to render him at length inde-

pendent of the mercantile occupation, which it had hitherto been necessary for him to pursue. And, as he seemed to be naturally of a somewhat contemplative and studious disposition, it may be supposed that it was with no great unwillingness or reluctance that he availed himself of the opportunity, which his circumstances thus afforded, of exchanging the routine duties of a counting-house for the more varied and more congenial pursuits of literature. For, it was now to the recreation of books that he took pleasure in mainly devoting those hours which had formerly been demanded by the sterner calls of business. Mr. Thurlow had by this time resided sufficiently long in the village of Sunnybrow to become well established in the acquaintance, and, I may add, in the estimation, of its inhabitants. His knowledge of the world and information on many important subjects, together with the sound, good sense which usually manifested itself in his conversation, constituted him an interesting and profitable companion to many; while his lively, genial, yet simple and unaffected, manner rendered him a general favourite with all.

The good vicar had duly fulfilled his promise to visit him from time to time at his lodgings, and had also on several occasions invited him to

his own house. Mr. Thurlow was indeed on terms of considerable intimacy with the inmates of the vicarage. Many were the pleasant evenings which he spent in the company of Mr. Rose and his little family ; and yet more frequently perhaps would Philip Rose pay a visit to Dame Peekle's, and make one of a quiet bachelor's party at his friend's supper-table.

Nor was the vicar disappointed in respect of the countenance and support with which he had hoped Mr. Thurlow might be found willing to second his parochial undertakings. That gentleman seemed to take a constant and increasing interest in all things that concerned the welfare, temporal and spiritual, of the little parish. Not only was he ever liberal with his contributions in aid of any good and useful object that might be in contemplation, and for the carrying out of which funds were insufficiently provided ; but he would even devote considerable portions of his time, and spare no amount of personal attention and labour, in furtherance of such measures as might tend to the moral and religious improvement of the people. So much so, that, before he had been many months at Sunnybrow, he had himself originated and taken the management of a young men's mutual improvement society, as

also offered his services as distributor of books and tracts among the poor people. The vicar had long since begun to look upon him as a sort of *right-hand man*, and rarely entered upon any important matter, without first taking him into counsel.

“Why, sir, you are as good as a curate to me !” he said, playfully, one morning, as they sat together in the library. “It is almost a pity that you are not in orders ! You could render me valuable help on Sundays, I am quite sure. Eh, Mr. Thurlow ? What do you say to that ?”

“I regret extremely, sir,” answered Mr. Thurlow, “that I am not in a position to be of *clerical* assistance to you ; but still, perhaps, even in my lay capacity, I might do something more than I have yet attempted. I believe, sir, that, should you feel at any time unequal to the whole of your somewhat numerous Sunday duties, it is in my power to relieve you of the superintendence of our little school. Pray, do not hesitate to call upon me, whenever you find it requisite. It can be no trouble to me, of course ; and I trust I am not bashful, when by coming forward I can be of real use.”

“You are very good indeed, sir,” replied Mr. Rose ; “but I scarcely like to take too great ad-

vantage of your good nature. However, as I see you desire it, I promise that, should I at any time be in absolute need of such assistance, I will bring you into requisition."

In these, then, and in sundry other ways did our good friend Mr. Thurlow show himself disposed to strengthen the hands of his clergyman.

Greatly (I would here venture to remark) to the advantage of our church would it be, if its ministers generally could tell of more ready and effectual co-operation on the part of their lay-people than they at present meet with.

Some few weeks subsequently to the conversation which I have just reported, it so happened that the vicar made an evening call upon Mr. Thurlow at his lodgings. During the course of this visit, our friend, who had for some little time appeared unusually reflective and abstracted, at length observed to Mr. Rose: "You hinted the other morning, sir (you may recollect), in a purely casual sort of way, at the idea of my having clerical orders, and were good enough to suggest that it might possibly be *advantageous* were I to possess them."

"Yes," answered Mr. Rose; "I do remember making some little remark to that effect. Well?"

"Well, the truth is," pursued Mr. Thurlow,

"that the thought had already occurred to my own mind, and I had more than once seriously considered the advisability of my taking a step of this nature."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Rose, looking up in some surprise; "indeed!"

"Such is the case, sir," continued the other; "I have for some time felt that to be occupied in religious work would be congenial to my own tastes; and now that I am sufficiently independent, in respect of worldly means, to need no longer to depend on my business for a livelihood, it would almost seem as though Providence had opened the door before me, and were calling me into some active sphere of more direct usefulness."

"I am truly rejoiced to hear this from you, Mr. Thurlow," said the vicar; "and I trust that, should you be ultimately determined to enter the ministry of the church, the Divine blessing may abundantly attend you in your future work. At the same time, let me say (without in the least degree wishing to discourage you from so excellent a purpose) that the step you contemplate is an infinitely important one, and such as should not be ventured upon without the most serious consideration. The office of a clergyman (you must be aware) is one of the highest and gravest

responsibility; and, in more regards than one, should a candidate's fitness for it be duly ascertained and made certain of. The error of him who lightly and thoughtlessly commits himself to the solemnities of holy orders cannot be overrated. But you have, doubtless, considered this subject, Mr. Thurlow, in its several bearings; and I feel well persuaded that you will not be found to act rashly or unadvisedly in a matter of so great consequence."

"I have indeed, sir, not named this thought to you, without giving it much previous consideration. But I should not wish to come to any immediate or hasty decision on the point. All that I would propose for the present is to prosecute such a course of preparatory study as would fit me to undergo a theological examination, should it *ultimately be judged expedient* that I should seek admission into the clerical office. But this, of course, might not be the case, and I should not at present wish to anticipate it too confidently."

"I quite approve of your acting with deliberation in this matter, Mr. Thurlow. Meanwhile, it will yield me great pleasure if I am permitted, occasionally, to assist your theological studies, as also to afford you from time to time such insight into the work of parochial management as my

somewhat lengthened experience enables me to do."

"I shall only be too thankful, sir," returned Mr. Thurlow, "to have the benefit of your kind instruction and training, whenever it may consist with your convenience to bestow a portion of your time upon me."

The vicar hereupon took his leave. On many accounts he naturally felt much gratified at the communication he had just received. Among other things, he was pleased to indulge the hope that, in the probable event of his needing ere long (owing to declining health) to have a coadjutor in his work, it might be his good fortune to obtain the services and assistance of so esteemed and valued a friend as Mr. Thurlow.

CHAPTER X.

MR. JOHN DAWS LENDS MONEY.



It will be necessary for us now to return for a few moments to the 'sanctum' of Mr. John Daws, which (it will be recollected) we visited once before, in the sixth chapter of this veracious narrative.

Here, then, we are at No. 1, Tyburn Court, Covent Garden. Mr. Daws is at home. We find him seated at his writing-table, arranging various papers and exchanging from time to time a few words with a friend—a gaily and somewhat fashionably-dressed young man—who lolls upon the couch with a cigar daintily balanced between his forefinger and thumb. This latter individual we easily recognise as our jovial acquaintance Mr. Job Hunter.

Before proceeding to relate the particulars of Mr. John Daws's present conversation with his young friend, it might be well, perhaps, were I first



somewhat to enlighten the reader, and relieve his wonder, as to who this Mr. John Daws really is.

Mr. Daws, then, originally, or at least so far back as it is to our purpose to trace his antecedents, formed one of that same company of strolling actors with which, at an early part of our tale, we found Mr. Job Hunter associating himself. Remaining in the above connection for many years, Mr. Daws at length, upon the death of his employer, himself obtained the control and proprietorship of the said small theatrical establishment. Being (for one in that particular line of life) a steady-going, sober, careful sort of person, he succeeded ultimately in saving and laying by some little amount of money, and had now, at the date of the present chapter, become sufficiently independent to be able to retire from the duties of the stage, whenever he might think proper so to do. For the present, however, he seemed inclined to continue in a profession and in pursuits to which long use had given him an attachment. Mr. Daws had all along been on terms of intimate acquaintance and friendship with Job Hunter; and indeed he had acted in the capacity of *patron* towards that young gentleman, by occasionally employing his services, when the pressure of pecuniary difficulties—the usual concomitant of

irregular and dissolute habits of life—rendered it necessary that Mr. Job should make an effort to replenish his exchequer, and no better expedient for that end suggested itself than the exercise of his dramatic talents. Daws, although, in point of moral character and principle, probably not a whit superior to the other, nevertheless had this advantage over his more impulsive and reckless companion, that the possession of a certain amount of natural caution, together with a habit of deliberation and calculation, served in general to prevent his falling into what are styled *scrapes*, and so to keep him, in a certain way, respectable ! So much may suffice for a brief account of Mr. John Daws, into whose private *boudoir* we had taken the liberty of intruding ourselves.

“ I say Job, my boy,” observed Mr. Daws, “ when are we to have some little settlement together ? The date of your loan has expired long since ; and you don’t seem like paying up, I think ! ”

“ The fact is, my dear fellow,” replied Mr. Job, “ I shall want a still further advance before that. You must let me have another fifty pounds before this month is out, or I’m done for.”

“ Oh, nonsense ! ” said Mr. Daws.

“ Fact,” continued the other ; “ I must have



it. It can't be done without. It would be impossible to keep up the requisite appearance otherwise. And now that I am within an inch of the goal, you would never be so cruel as to baulk and hinder me for the sake of such a trifle ! Come, come, one other fifty, and the prize is mine. *Ours*, I should say ; for your share in it is not a little one, you old Jew !”

“ But are you sure you are in a fair way to succeed ? Suppose you didn't win the girl after all !” suggested Mr. Daws.

“ Suppose a fiddlestick ! Why, my dear Jack, I *have* succeeded. The bird is caged, sir ! Only, there is a certain amount of formality and delay in these cases, you know ; and meanwhile cash must be forthcoming. Things have to be kept going in proper, dashing style ; and this cannot be done on nothing.”

“ Is she still lodged in St. John's Wood ?” asked Mr. Daws.

“ Still,” replied Job.

“ You are really engaged to her ? Are you ?”

“ Really engaged,” was the reply.

“ But the day is not yet fixed ?”

“ No.”

“ How long will it be ?”

“ A month, or two months at the most. I can

take my oath this will be the very outside. Do let me have the *wherewithal*, for both our sakes. You're a real good fellow, Jack, as I always said."

"I know I am," said Mr. Daws; "but I never heard of your saying so. Well, really, I don't know whether I can manage this for you or not. You see you are already pretty deep in my books, and—Of course, I am well aware I have a remedy against you, if matters should come to the worst. I have a hold on you certainly; and you daren't give me the slip for your life. No, you'll not venture that, I expect. You remember a certain little transaction about a dozen years ago? You've not forgotten the 31st of October yet? Eh?"

"No, indeed; I recollect that pretty well, and I'm pretty tight in your clutches. But come; you need have no scruples. All is sure to come right; and you know what a good thing you will clear out of this for yourself. Why, man alive! the chances would be well worth running, even if there were any doubt of success!"

"Well, well," said Mr. Daws, "we will deal; but I make a condition with you:—You must give me an evening next week. You must play for me on Tuesday night. *Sweet William*, who was engaged to act the *Elaborate Liar*, has taken ill and cannot 'come up to the scratch.' Now,

nobody is able to supply his place better than yourself, no, nor as well as yourself; and if you will represent this character publicly for once, you will bring down the house, you may depend. The farce shall be extra-well placarded, and we will have the *Little Apollo* crammed, and get a splendid haul. Come, you'll do this for me, I know. And here are twenty-five down for you this minute, and the rest as soon as you have earned them."

"And I shall only owe you for the twenty-five? Eh?" suggested Mr. Job Hunter.

"Well, that must depend on the success you have. But I will promise you a handsome deduction."

"Very well, Jack; agreed. It must be as you say, I suppose. Beggars cannot always be choosers. I will do my best for you. Thanks for the blunt. And now, *au revoir*. I suppose we shall meet at the *Traveller's Rest* later in the day?"

"As usual," said Mr. Daws, as the other now took his leave.

CHAPTER XI.

THE "ELABORATE LIAR."

PHILIP ROSE had resided now in London for some six months or more, and during that time had (as you can suppose) made acquaintance and contracted friendship with several young men of his own age and condition. His companions, although not perhaps, in every case, exactly those which his own inclination and taste might have led him to select, had he been choosing his company, were such as his professional connection or chance circumstances drew towards him, and were at any rate (as the reader will not doubt, from his knowledge of our young friend's character) perfectly respectable and creditable individuals. Among these, he was on terms of more particular intimacy with a banker's clerk, of the name of Andrewes, who occupied apartments in the house which next adjoined his own lodging.

One afternoon, as Philip Rose was entertaining Mr. Thurlow at dinner (for that gentleman occasionally came and paid him a visit when any matter brought him into town), young Andrewes, hastily pushing open the door and rushing in somewhat unceremoniously, flung a large placard upon the centre of the table.

"There!" he exclaimed. "There's something for you, now!"

The paper was a play-bill of the *Little Apollo* theatre; and inscribed on it, in big characters and in various styles of type, were the following announcements:—

THE ELABORATE LIAR!

IMMENSE ATTRACTION!

MR. JOB HUNTER TO-NIGHT!

POSITIVELY HIS ONLY APPEARANCE!

&c., &c., &c.

"Have you heard of this, Rose?" continued the incomer. "It is rare good fun, I am told; the finest comic piece on the boards at present, they say. What do you say to go? I'm ready for it, if you are. But I beg your friend's pardon for bursting in so abruptly. I didn't know you were engaged."

"Oh, don't name it, sir," said Mr. Thurlow, politely; "pray, don't name it; you are not at all intruding; we were discussing no secrets."

"Well, Rose, what do you say to this?" said Andrewes, as he took a seat, which his friend had now placed for him. "Shall you go?"

"No, I don't care about it," said Philip. "I don't go to plays, you know. I have told you so before."

His neighbour Andrewes's abrupt entrance with the play-bill was a little inopportune just then, in the presence of Mr. Thurlow; and Philip Rose felt some little degree of annoyance at the circumstance. He did not care to have it suspected by the good people at home that he might be a frequenter of low theatres.

"It will be worth your while to go to this," persisted Andrewes.

"No," said Philip, with an air of resolution. "No."

"You won't go then? Very well. I'll go with Ainsley instead."

Mr. Thurlow, after glancing over the bill and making one or two good-humoured remarks on the subject of theatres and theatre-going, with which he appeared to have but small sympathy, presently took his leave.

Young Andrewes, when he found he could not prevail on his friend Rose to accompany him to the *Little Apollo*, set out in search of some other companion. And he experienced no difficulty in finding more than one who, like himself, wanted an evening's amusement.

As it so happened, however, Mr. Andrewes was not destined to have the satisfaction of hearing the *Elaborate Liar* on this occasion. For when, two or three hours afterwards, he returned home for the purpose of dressing himself suitably to the entertainment, he found, somewhat to his dismay, that his worthy and respected father, who was a Wesleyan minister of some repute, and who had a devout horror of the comic drama, had just arrived in town, and had come to spend a quiet and profitable evening with his son !

CHAPTER XII.

MR. THURLOW RESCUES ELLEN.



HERE took place at Sunnybrow about this time an occurrence which, seeing that it had the effect of drawing somewhat more closely those ties of intimate acquaintance and friendship whereby Mr. Thurlow had so long been bound to the worthy vicar and the members of his little family, I ought not perhaps to leave unrecorded.

Sunnybrow abounded on all sides with lovely and picturesque scenery ; and it was a favourite recreation of Miss Smyth, during the finer seasons of the year, to make short excursions into the adjacent districts, for the purpose of admiring and studying their natural beauties, and (inasmuch as she possessed some skill in the use of the pencil) of making them the subject of an occasional landscape-drawing. With the above object, she had (in company with a lady friend—a

former school-fellow—who was then upon a visit to her) repaired one fine autumnal afternoon to a sheltered and richly-wooded little valley, distant some three or four furlongs from the village.

As there, with her sketch-book before her, she reclined upon the grassy slope, and while her companion, who had recently left her side, was now roaming some few hundred yards away in search of specimens of certain rare and curious mosses of which they were jointly preparing a collection, all at once the strange figure of a man might be seen slowly to emerge from the dark, shady recesses of a small coppice which grew in her immediate rear. He was a rough, shaggy-looking fellow, meanly and miserably clad in tattered garments, of swarthy complexion, and with coarse, ill-shapen features, and beneath whose heavy beetle-brows there gleamed forth a pair of keen grey eyes with a mingled expression of cunning and ferocity.

Pausing for an instant, he glanced about, cautiously and furtively, on all sides of his lurking-place, as though to make sure that he was unobserved. He then, with soft, stealthy tread, and crouching low upon the ground, so as to gain the concealment afforded by some intervening bushes, advanced by slow degrees in the direction of the

young lady who, all unconscious of the impending danger, occupied her quiet, rural seat in front of him. When he had at length approached sufficiently near for his purpose, he then, with a sudden spring, darted forward upon his victim, and, before she had time to become so much as aware of his presence, had seized and firmly pinioned her in his iron grasp.

With frowns and menacing gestures enjoining silence upon her, and, at the same time (in order to secure her more ready compliance), pressing his knuckles tightly against her throat, he now straightway proceeded, with rude force, to tear away the several articles of jewellery that were attached to her person ; and, so powerless was any resistance which, in her prostrate position, she could oppose to his violence, there seemed every likelihood of his successfully completing, in the course of another minute or so, the work of spoliation in which he was engaged. The loud shriek of terror, however, with which the poor young lady had received the first shock of the ruffian's attack had not vainly sent forth its appeal for aid. Favoured by the direction of the wind, it fell, most fortunately, on the ear of our good friend Mr. Thurlow, who was then on the point of returning home, after a day's fishing in

the small trout-stream which meandered through the valley, and who, just at that moment, was making a final cast under a ledge of rock at no great distance.

Attracted by sounds so unusual, that gentleman, leaving his rod and basket at the water's edge, scrambled hastily up the bank, until he came in full view of the scene we have depicted. Discerning, at a glance, how matters stood, he lost no time (the reader can well believe) in speeding to the rescue. He at once grappled boldly and manfully with Miss Smyth's brutal assailant, and, after a protracted and, at first, rather doubtful struggle, eventually succeeded (so great was the address and dexterity of which he showed himself master) in obtaining such an advantage over a man of nearly twice his own bulk and strength, that the plundering villain was not only compelled to relinquish the booty of which he had taken possession, but, indeed, barely managed to disengage himself and effect his retreat and escape amid the underwood which densely overspread the side of the hill.

Mr. Thurlow, after hailing some labourers who were at work in a neighbouring quarry, and setting them on the track of the fugitive robber, then immediately devoted his efforts to the re-


storation of the young lady whom he had so gallantly defended and rescued, but who had swooned away during the recent encounter. Water having been procured from the rivulet below and freely sprinkled upon her face and temples, she returned presently to a state of consciousness ; and, after a brief interval, had so far recovered from the effects of her *fright* (for *otherwise*, she had, happily, not sustained any very serious amount of injury) as to be able, supported on the arm of her deliverer, to walk back to the vicarage at Sunnybrow.

The valuable service which Mr. Thurlow had been in a position to render to Miss Smyth on this occasion was one of which that young lady could not fail to be deeply sensible ; and we may feel sure that their friend's heroic behaviour would meet with every acknowledgment on the part of Mr. Rose and the members of his family.

I regret to have to add, in reference to the daring outrage above recorded, that all efforts for the discovery and capture of its perpetuator were doomed to prove unavailing. Owing to the irregular and undulating character of the country in that particular district, and more especially to the abundant shelter which the woods afforded on all sides, the miscreant was enabled to remain in concealment and successfully to elude his pursuers.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE BOOK UPSIDE-DOWN.

T so happened, during the course of one pleasant evening, which Mr. Thurlow was spending at the vicarage of Sunnybrow, that Mr. Rose, owing to the arrival by post of a business-letter of importance, found it necessary to interrupt a game of backgammon, in which the young people were agreeably engaged, for the purpose of having a short conversation with his cousin, Ellen Smyth, on family-concerns of a private nature. Apologising to Mr. Thurlow and retiring with the young lady into a recess of the apartment, he entered briefly upon certain financial questions. Among other things, the will of the late Honourable Mrs. Smyth—an old money-investment, in which the Smyths and the Gauntletts had been jointly interested—and, in particular, the lease of some properties in Devonshire, which, by her parents'

death, had come into the possession of Ellen; these and kindred points were subjects of discussion. During the continuance of this *tête-à-tête*, which was prolonged for some little time, our friend Mr. Thurlow, who was not concerned in the conversation that was being carried on apart from him, had taken a volume from the table and was presently deep-buried in its pages. (The volume was a copy of Oliver Goldsmith's famous romance, the *Vicar of Wakefield*.)

Now, it is here to be recorded as an indisputable fact that, when Miss Smyth's friend, to whom we made allusion in the last chapter, entering suddenly and softly about this time through a side-door, took a general survey of the whole drawing-room, she perceived (among other objects that caught her eye) that the book, upon which Mr. Thurlow had been for so long intent, was *up-side down*!

Having disburdened myself of this little piece of information, I leave it to the reader to accept it for what he may consider it worth, and to attach any significance to the circumstance he may think proper!

CHAPTER XIV.

A FRIENDLY CAUTION.



MORE than once in the foregoing chapters, I have incidentally referred to the presence of a certain lady-visitor at our little vicarage. This, I may state, was a Miss Warner, who had originally known Ellen at school, and whose early acquaintance with our 'heroine' had not been suffered, during subsequent years of separation, to fall away and die out through mutual neglect, but, fostered by a regular correspondence and an occasional interchange of visits, had ripened gradually into a friendship of more than ordinary warmth and intimacy; so much so that, at the present period of our history, Caroline Warner was Ellen Smyth's most attached and confidential companion.

It might perhaps serve to throw light on one or two points of interest, and also be somewhat

in furtherance of our *plot*, were I here to place the reader in possession of a little private conversation which, a few mornings subsequently to the incident of the last chapter, took place between our two young ladies in Mr. Rose's breakfast-parlour.

* * * * *

"Surely, my dear Caroline, you will never think of leaving us so soon ! I cannot for one moment hear of such a thing. You must remain over to-morrow at all events. Mr. Thurlow, you know, is coming in to tea, and we are expecting to have quite a little musical treat. You have not yet had an opportunity of hearing Mr. Thurlow sing, I believe ?"

"Well," answered the other, "I must consider about it. I should very much like to stay ; although the particular inducement you hold out would not perhaps go very far towards retaining me."

"There again, Caroline ! There you are again ! What can possibly be your objection to Mr. Thurlow ? and why do you always make a point of disparaging and snubbing the poor man ? I really cannot understand your dislike to him at all."

"I have no *dislike* to him, my dear ; no *positive dislike* to him, although I must confess that my

admiration for him is somewhat of the slightest. But I am sorry, Ellen, if I have betrayed any signs of aversion towards one who appears to be rather a favourite of yours—indeed, I might say, a very particular favourite of yours! Eh?”

“How can you talk so, Caroline? As though Mr. Thurlow were any more a favourite with myself than with the rest of us! Why do you persist in quizzing me about him in this way?”

“It is your own fault, my dear, if I have reason for doing so. And you will not be offended, Ellen, if I tell you—now that we are upon the subject—that it surprises me extremely that you should allow this Mr. Thurlow to run after you in the way he does. His attentions are most marked; and his *intentions*, too (I expect), no less decided.”

“How can you say such a thing, Caroline?”

“Why, my dear, *everybody* is saying it!”

“Then everybody is very foolish and very malicious,” answered Ellen, somewhat pettishly.

“I don’t know about that,” returned the other.

“The fact of the matter is, Ellen, you have some little—what shall I call it?—some little *weakness* for this Mr. Thurlow? Eh? You can’t deny it. Come now, confess.”

“You have no right to put such questions,

Caroline. I have given you no ground whatever for any such supposition. I think of Mr. Thurlow, of course, just as we all do—as a very pleasant and agreeable person. Nothing beyond that, of course.”

“Of course not,” ironically assented her companion, with affected gravity. “Of course not. Well, well,” she added presently with a good-humoured smile, “I quite understand the state of your case, dear ; and I shall be all ready with my congratulations the moment they are required.”

* * * * *

“But, my dear Caroline,” argued Ellen, after the other had pursued her strain of *badinage* a little further,—“but, my dear Caroline, even granting that what you say were all true, what objection, after all, could any person have a right to make ? Why should I not admire Mr. Thurlow, if I like ? He is well-bred, and clever, and good, too.”

“Why, my dearest child,” answered Miss Warner, “you are simply absurd ! You would surely never for one moment permit yourself to think seriously about a man of whom you know literally nothing ! Who is this Mr. Thurlow ? and what is he ? I should much like to know. Between ourselves, indeed, I am more than half-

inclined to set him down for some adventurer, whose designs—”

“I know what you were going to say, Caroline,” interrupted the other. “But you are most uncharitable and most unjust in your suspicions; and I will not hear Mr. Thurlow spoken of in this way, who is altogether superior to any considerations of a mercenary and sordid nature. *You* don’t know him, Caroline, and *we* do.”

“Very well, Ellen; very well. I have nothing more to say, of course. You must judge for yourself, and act for yourself. Only, don’t say you have not been cautioned and forewarned, if you should find yourself under a mistake and in a predicament one day! Understand, I *assert* nothing to the prejudice of your admirer; I only recommend common prudence.”

“You needn’t be apprehensive, dear,” rejoined the other; “I have all my wits about me, I assure you.”

“Well, well,” said Miss Warner, “I only trust it may be so. But, oh, dearest Ellen,” she added immediately with affectionate earnestness, “you will excuse my saying so, but I really do not approve of your growing friendship and intimacy with this man, until, at least, you know something more respecting him. And, indeed, after

all—whoever he be or whatever he be—I feel quite confident, Ellen, he is not the best and most suitable partner you could find for yourself. I could name some one else who is infinitely more worthy of your regard, and to whom (I suspect) you are by no means an object of indifference !”

“Eh, Caroline? Whom can you possibly mean, now ?” asked the other, in considerable curiosity.

“Why, your handsome cousin, to be sure ; who else ?”

“Oh, that’s all ? Only Phil ?” answered Ellen, as a momentary shade of disappointment crossed her brow. “Oh, no, Caroline ; you are quite under a mistake there, my dear. Philip is very well, of course ; and I like him very much, you may be quite sure. But as to what you hint, that is entirely out of the question. Phil cares nothing at all about me in the sort of way you refer to.”

“Well, he did *once*, at any rate, if he doesn’t *now*. Everybody knew that and said so at the time.”

“Ah, yes, I dare say. Indeed (to confess the truth to you) at one time I was simple enough to fancy something of that sort, myself. But I soon found out, by his subsequent demeanour towards me, that there had been nothing serious in it at all—merely a little piece of boyish flirtation ! No,

no, Caroline ; Phil is my very good cousin, and that is the sum total of his regard and esteem for me."

" Well, never mind, then, dear," returned Miss Warner. " Let it rest so. I have told you all my thoughts and sentiments ; and I am sure that you will not take it amiss if, in my friendship for you, I have spoken out somewhat freely."

" Oh, dear, no—not at all, dear Caroline," replied the other, as she ran up and warmly embraced her companion. " Indeed, I am most obliged, and most grateful, for the kind interest you take in my welfare. I know full well I have no truer and better friend in the whole world than yourself. But you really need not be uneasy on my account, Caroline—as though I were about to commit myself to anything rash and silly. I have no intention, let me assure you, of marrying either Mr. Thurlow or Phil, or any one else—at present, at any rate. Indeed, now, I shouldn't be at all surprised if I were to live and die an old maid !"

" Ah, well, time will show, Ellen," replied her companion, with a somewhat dubious, ominous look ; " time will show."

CHAPTER XV.

IN WHICH PHILIP HAS AN IMPORTANT COMMUNICATION FROM HIS FATHER.



SOME quarter of a year must now be supposed to have glided away since the occurrences related in the last two or three chapters. This period had been almost entirely barren of any incidents of importance to the principal personages of our tale. The circumstances of all parties seemed to be continuing pretty much *in statu quo*; life at Sunnybrow vicarage still flowing on in its usual peaceful course; Mr. Thurlow still reading divinity and availing himself from time to time of Mr. Rose's kind assistance; Philip Rose still engineering; Mr. Job Hunter still the gay, fast young man about town; Mr. Daws still advancing money; and so on, as to all the others.

The mystery of the murder, too, remained still as great a mystery as ever. Philip Rose, paying strict heed to the injunctions of Mr. Makepeace,


had had frequent interviews with Mrs. Pilbreth, but as yet had succeeded in gleaning no information of any great value. So that, on the whole, we have little or nothing to chronicle in connection with these three months, unless it be that *Ellen Smyth, during a short visit to some friends in town, had had made to her an offer of marriage, which she had seen fit to decline ; or the circumstance that Mr. Thurlow had recently been entertaining certain visitors at his lodgings—an uncle and aunt, and also a gentleman of the name of Burrowgrave, from London, which latter had stayed three or four days at Dame Peekle's, and had on more than one occasion accompanied his friend of an evening to the vicarage.*

In the midst of this somewhat uneventful state of things, it so chanced that the post one day brought a letter to Mr. Philip Rose, at his new lodgings in *Wellesley Street*, to which he had now removed, as for some time past contemplated. It was in his father's handwriting, and contained news from home. Its contents being in some respects important, I will not scruple to present the reader with it in full.

“ Sunnybrow Vicarage, January 11, 18**.

“ My dear Phil,—Your last letter was very welcome at the vicarage ; and we shall always be

most happy to hear from you when you have anything to communicate that is likely to interest us, either in the way of general news, or in reference to your own particular affairs. It is a pleasure to me to learn that you are satisfied with your present position under Sir Archibald, and that the labours connected with it are not unduly trying to you. At the same time, one cannot but regret that this recent extension of your professional duties should have the effect of so far diminishing your intercourse with the members of your family ; and, more particularly, were we sorry to see your place the other day unoccupied, for the first time, at our Christmas table. I trust that, in your exile from home, you have been able to meet with some pleasant and cheerful companions. You should make acquaintances, if possible, as 'dulness is apt to accompany too much solitude. At the same time, it is well to use care as to what friends one makes in a place like London. But I feel sure that any admonitions of this sort, on my part, are unnecessary in your case. Mr. Thurlow told me of your refusal to go with young Mr. Andrewes to the entertainment of the *Elaborate Liar*; (what a monstrous character for any one to have to sustain !) and I think you acted wisely in refusing your company. You know my



view of the general tendency of theatrical exhibitions ; and (as I believe) you yourself concur in it.


“ Things are much the same here as usual. The ‘ new-school ’ project seems in a fair way to succeed ; and I think I mentioned to you how handsomely Mr. Thurlow had *come down* in aid of it. I find a great deal of advantage in Mr. Thurlow’s presence at Sunnybrow, and that in very many ways. He is really a most useful and valuable person, and, to my mind, a character of a very superior order. Should he determine ultimately to enter the ministry, I think our church will have reason to be proud of this accession to its *staff*.

“ Your cousin desires her love, and begs me to thank you for your little note to her, together with the hamper that accompanied it.

“ By the way, speaking of Ellen, I may tell you (*inter nos*) that she seems of late to have taken some little fancy, indeed, if I am not deceived, a pretty strong fancy, to our worthy friend. I do not profess to be very keen-sighted in matters of this description ; but still there are certain indications which even the most unobservant can scarcely fail to notice. If there should prove to be anything serious in this—if it should appear likely to ripen into anything of a decided character—I do

not know that I should altogether wish to discourage such a result, or that I should be justified in seeking to put a check on my ward's inclinations. She is now of such an age that she may fairly claim the right to judge and act for herself, and to dispose of her hand and fortune as she thinks best ; and, now that she has to some extent moved in society, if her preference should, after due consideration, be given to Mr. Thurlow, why, to say the truth, I do not know any one to whom I would, with more confidence, entrust Ellen's happiness, or more gladly and heartily welcome into my own family-circle.

“What do you think of this piece of domestic news, Phil? When my memory goes back to a little private confabulation you and I had together in the library some few years ago, I begin to question whether the above may be altogether gratifying intelligence to you. I rather fear not, indeed, should certain sentiments, which you then confessed to, have survived the lapse of time. However, be this as it may, one cannot always command what one would desire ; and it becomes necessary and one's duty oftentimes to acquiesce, when one cannot alter or avert. It is plain that there can be no forcing or controlling of matters here. Things must run their natural course—



take their chance, so to say, and your cousin will do as her inclinations tend. At the same time, Phil, we will make no hasty conclusions. My surmises may possibly be only surmises after all. Time will, no doubt, show ere long. So much, then, for my little piece of news. You know now all that is to be known at present on this interesting subject. I expect to be in town in the course of a day or two, when I will probably look in upon you. But don't remain indoors in expectation of me, as my engagements are a little uncertain. With kind love,

“Believe me, your affectionate father,

“J. G. ROSE.


“To Philip Rose, Esq., C.E.

“P.S.—You recollect the Browns—Mr. Thurlow's uncle and aunt—who lunched with us during their short visit to Sunnybrow in the autumn, and with whom we were all so much pleased? It appears that this Dr. Brown is a person of some consideration and consequence in the London world; more so than I had gathered from the little Mr. Thurlow has said to me respecting his relative. The manner in which I first came to discover the above was rather singular. I received some little time ago a letter bearing the London postmark, in which the writer, address-

ing me as *his dear nephew*, recommended my becoming a candidate for a certain rather distinguished and lucrative 'Government' post that was just then on the point of becoming vacant; to which he further added that, could I only be prevailed on to forego the pleasures of my retired and contemplative life, and aspire to the above, his own influence with the present Cabinet was probably sufficient to command the appointment and secure it in my favour, etc.

"It was not until I had perused the whole that my surprise sufficiently abated to permit me to understand that the communication had been intended for no other person than our friend Thurlow.

"On my transferring it to him, which, of course, I did without delay, I found that he himself also had been similarly puzzled and perplexed on that very same morning, having received a letter full of statistics relative to some London Hospital, all of which, to use his own expression, was *Greek* to him. The fact was that Mr. Thurlow's letter had, in its turn, been intended for myself, being the fulfilment of a promise which his uncle made me, when we met here, to obtain for me, if possible, certain information of which I was desirous and in rather particular need.



“The Doctor had, it seems, been writing to both of us by the same post, and had inadvertently slipped the one note into the envelope designed to receive the other. A simple enough mistake, but one the effect of which might, in certain conceivable cases, prove somewhat awkward. In this instance, however, it merely served to give rise to a little amusement. J. G. R.”

The reader, who has duly perused the earlier chapters of this history, will feel pretty sure that the contents of Mr. Rose's letter were not altogether gratifying to his son. The information conveyed in the second half of it was very far from palatable to the young man. Poor Philip ! Here came a sad damper to the hopes he had fondly cherished for so many years in secret ! Oh ! how he now regretted that he had ever followed his father's counsels, and deferred speaking his sentiments to his cousin !

Now that he had gained an independent position and was in the enjoyment of a comfortable income, and his long-contemplated marriage had become at length practicable, oh ! how mortifying to think and feel that, just when he was prepared to grasp it, the prize should be passing away from his hands ! Still (he encouraged himself to think) there might yet be time ; there might yet remain a chance for

him. His father's letter did not represent the matter as decided. And, although (supposing Ellen's affections to be fairly engaged to Mr. Thurlow) it would be far from his intention or desire to interfere, in any dishonourable manner, between them, he yet resolved to lose no time at least in ascertaining the actual state of the case ; and, should the field, as he ventured to hope, appear yet open to him, to lay immediate siege to the heart of his cousin, and prevent, if possible, her becoming the property of his rival.

In this determination, he took the very earliest opportunity his somewhat numerous and confining professional engagements permitted, of hastening down to the little village of Sunnybrow. With what result and success his journey thither was fated to be attended, it will be more convenient to make the subject of a new chapter.

CHAPTER XVI.

ENGAGED.



THE first thing that Mr. Philip Rose did on his arrival at the vicarage, was to have an interview with his father, whose letter had occasioned his somewhat unexpected return home, and who, probably, might have much more to say by word of mouth than he had found it easy, or possible, to communicate in writing.


Philip, after what had already passed between him and his father on a previous occasion (as the reader, doubtless, well remembers), made no hesitation in frankly avowing to Mr. Rose what were his thoughts and feelings on a subject which had so long lain nearest to his heart.

The conversation which hereupon ensued need not be reported *in extenso*. It will be sufficient for all the purposes of my narrative to extract certain portions from it.

* * * * *

"I will go and speak with Ellen at once," said Philip, interrupting his father, somewhat impatiently. And he turned to leave the library.

"Stay, Phil," said Mr. Rose, "stay. I had not finished all I wanted to say to you. Hear me out. Since my letter of last Saturday, I have had further opportunities of judging how matters stood, and I have also taken occasion to have a quiet word with Ellen myself on this subject. The case, I imagine, is pretty much as I had surmised. When I pressed her, your cousin did not altogether deny that she entertained some little partiality for our friend. And I can have no doubt, from many things that in the last few days have come under my observation, that the attachment is even still more decided on the part of Mr. Thurlow. Not, of course, that there exists, as yet, anything in the shape of a distinct understanding between them. I should scarcely expect that matters have advanced to that point. Mr. Thurlow has, I feel sure, too high a sense of what is honourable and according to propriety, to make any open profession of his sentiments to a young lady, without first gaining her guardian's consent, or, at least, doing him the courtesy of signifying his wishes and intentions in the matter. But I have been rather looking for Mr. Thurlow



doing this the last day or two ; and, to say the truth, Phil, it appeared to me, from some little strangeness and embarrassment in our friend's manner, that he was just on the point of introducing the matter to me this morning, at the moment when you came in and cut short our colloquy."

* * * * *

"Well, Phil," said Mr. Rose, in reply to some remarks his son had interposed, "it is very natural and very pardonable to feel a little impulsive in a situation of this kind ; but let me dissuade you from doing anything hastily and without consideration. A day or two, at the most, will, I feel convinced, show how this matter is going to turn ; and, under the circumstances, I think you would act most wisely in now awaiting the issue of any proposal Mr. Thurlow may be on the point of making to your cousin. You would not desire, I am sure, unnecessarily to occasion any pain or annoyance to either of the parties ; as I think you might be likely to do, were you to attempt to come between them, now that they have once become, as there is reason to conclude, mutually attached. Your interference, in such case, could not be successful ; and, if not, of what must it be productive ? It would pain Ellen in all probabi-

lity ; and it could only serve to create estrangement between yourself and Mr. Thurlow. Wait, I say ; and, if nothing *speedily* comes of this affair, why, then, I should think you might fairly be justified in speaking your mind to your cousin. The delay, I recommend, cannot be very long ; and a few additional hours of suspense will not kill you, you may be sure. I quite understand and can sympathise with your anxiety ; but it will be most advantageous for all parties, if you act as I suggest."

" Well, father," answered Philip, " I suppose you are right ; and when I now think over all you have informed me, I have no doubt it will be best as you say. I will wait, then, and see what another day may bring forth."

" You are quite right in coming to this decision, Phil, whichever way things may be shortly found to go. I shall be sorry if you are destined to meet with disappointment in regard of the wishes and hopes you have so long entertained for Ellen ; but do not allow such a circumstance to distress you too greatly. You may be sure that all will result for the best in the long run, one way or another ; and it is certain that we are always happiest, and wisest, too, in acquiescing in whatever Providence may grant or deny to us.

I should have been truly rejoiced to see you and Ellen ultimately united; but if the will of Heaven should prove to be otherwise, well, then, I am content—and you, my son, must feel content—that it should be so.”

Philip Rose followed the counsels of his father, in regard of the matter which had been under discussion between them ; and (as the result presently showed) it was quite as well, perhaps, that he did so. Mr. Rose’s anticipations were so far well-founded that no later day than the very next following, saw Mr. Thurlow the accepted lover of Ellen Smyth !

CHAPTER XVII.

MR. BURROWGRAVE.

DAYS and weeks and months rolled on ; and, although unmarked by any events of special interest, the time yet passed pleasantly enough to certain of our young friends at Sunnybrow vicarage. But it is not necessary for me to say much of Ellen and Mr. Thurlow. All particulars that might be stated relatively to the loving pair, during this enjoyable period of their life, can be as well, if not better, supplied by the reader's own imagination. Suffice it merely to add, in regard to them, that it had been approved and agreed on all hands, and for numerous good and sufficient reasons, that the term of their engagement should not be an unduly protracted one ; and, consequently, a certain date, at no great distance, had now been fixed upon and determined, when the matrimonial knot should be tied, and they should exchange the

pleasures of courtship for the happiness of wedded-life.

Meanwhile, I have to record the appearance, or, rather, the reappearance, in our village, of a Mr. Burrowgrave. For that gentleman (as the reader is aware) had already once before passed a few days at Sunnybrow as the guest of Mr. Thurlow. There had been something peculiar in the circumstances of his visit on that occasion. His arrival had evidently been unexpected—it might almost be thought, even unwelcome! Mr. Thurlow was spending the evening at the vicarage at the time; and when Mr. Burrowgrave, on coming thither in quest of him, was ushered into the drawing-room, where his friend was sitting at the tea-table, there seemed a degree of confusion in the manner of the latter, as he rose to receive him, which struck the members of Mr. Rose's family with some little surprise! (A reason for any such embarrassment, on the part of Mr. Thurlow, may probably discover itself in the progress of our tale.)

This Mr. Burrowgrave, so far as Mr. Thurlow had been led to speak of him, was understood to be a London merchant, who had recently retired from business; but whether in consequence of the success or the failure of his affairs, did not at present transpire! The peculiar position which

Mr. Burrowgrave is about to occupy in the pages that follow, may perhaps require that I should here add some brief description of his outward style and appearance.

Picture, then, a man apparently between thirty and forty years of age, tall, and of somewhat spare and meagre figure, with the face closely shaven, but with a profusion of bushy black hair covering the head, his complexion slightly pallid, his features sharp and pointed, the general expression of his physiognomy indicating some little severity, or perhaps even moroseness, of character; picture this, and you have a sufficiently accurate portrait of Mr. Burrowgrave. I will only add further that the gentleman in question was a person of considerable reserve, and that his manner, while escaping the imputation of rudeness, was yet distinguished, occasionally, by a degree of abruptness and bluntness, the effect of which was not altogether agreeable. Such, then, may suffice for a brief sketch of Mr. Burrowgrave.

One morning, as Philip Rose (who had come to spend a few days at Sunnybrow) was sitting with his father in the library, Mr. Rose observed:—

“ We shall probably not see Mr. Thurlow to-day. He has his friend with him at present; that Mr. Burrowgrave, whom I mentioned to you as having been here some little time ago.”

“Who is this Mr. Burrowgrave?” asked Philip.
“What sort of a person is he?”

“Well, I really know very little of him,” answered the vicar; “I have only met with him once or twice, and exchanged a few words on perfectly indifferent topics. He seemed rather a silent person, I thought—a little shy or nervous, perhaps. There was nothing about him which struck me as being particularly interesting or prepossessing.”

“It didn’t appear to you that there was anything strange or eccentric in the things he said or did?” inquired Philip.

“No,” replied Mr. Rose, in some surprise at the question. “What makes you ask this?”

“Well, I will tell you,” said Philip. “It so happens that I have just had a sight of this Mr. Burrowgrave myself, and have been a little puzzled at what I have noticed in him!”

“Indeed!” said the vicar.

“Yes,” continued Philip; “as I was sitting this morning in the little summer-house at the end of the garden-walk, I saw Mr. Thurlow and his friend coming across the fields together. On gaining the road and before re-entering the village, they paced backwards and forwards for a few minutes on the footpath, nearly opposite to

where I sat. They seemed in warm discussion and (as I thought from the impatient gestures of Mr. Burrowgrave, and, indeed, one or two oaths which, unless my ears deceived me, I heard slip from him) in rather sharp altercation together, in respect to some matter of importance to the interests of both. Occasional snatches of their conversation, as they passed, from time to time, close by, were, of course, all that I could overhear; but what did reach my ears, was quite sufficient to excite in me some little curiosity and wonder as to this guest of Mr. Thurlow's. 'Now, don't misunderstand me,' said Mr. Thurlow; 'don't set me down as inhospitable; but I certainly think it is rather a pity you have again turned up here in this sort of way. It can do no good. You might be sure that your not having heard from me meant that, as yet, I had nothing definite to say.'

" 'Well, but, you see,' said the other, 'I was beginning to feel a little anxious; and the truth is I couldn't wait any longer without seeing you. I am very hard pressed by all of them; and there is one fellow that won't be said *nay* to at all; he talks of an *execution*, in fact.'

" 'I cannot believe,' said Mr. Thurlow, 'that your affairs are really and truly in such a state as



you describe. You frighten yourself needlessly, my dear sir. . . . Any way, it would have been better if you had dropped me a line, so that I might have been prepared for your visit. I am glad enough to see you, of course ; but still there is an awkwardness in being come down upon unexpectedly. It puts all sorts of little things out of order and out of joint.'

" ' Well, the fact is, I did sit down to write to you, in the first instance ; but on consideration, I thought better of it (or worse of it, I suppose), and came off at once. I am very sorry if I have inconvenienced you ; but I couldn't help being a little fidgety and uncomfortable, as you had not communicated with me, as I expected, and as was arranged, you will remember.'

* * * * *

" ' It is unfortunate that you should have had a journey all for nothing,' said Mr. Thurlow ; ' for I am really not in a position to do anything just at present. You will be obliged to wait. You may be sure I will do 'what I can for you the moment it is possible to do anything.'

" ' But why did you deceive me ?' asked Mr. Burrowgrave. ' There was no need for it, nor any use in it. I must say I think this was shabby and unkind in you, and not at all what I had deserved of you.'

“ ‘Well, my dear fellow,’ returned Mr. Thurlow, ‘I am really sorry if I have misled you or allowed you to remain under a false impression. However, no harm has come of it, and it will be all the same to you in the end. So that you can manage to forgive me this little offence, if it is an offence. You will be here next month, of course, all the same? I always intended you should, although I did not say so in so many words.’

“ ‘Well, well,’ said Mr. Burrowgrave, ‘let us say no more about it. Now that I am here, I will remain with you till to-morrow morning, if you have no very particular engagements. I suppose you can receive me for another day?’

“ ‘Oh, by all means,’ rejoined Mr. Thurlow, as taking his friend’s arm, he now led him towards the village. Their conversation, of which I was able to glean these few fragmentary portions, was carried on, for the most part, in a subdued tone of voice, and was interrupted, I noticed, on the part of Mr. Thurlow (when his friend’s earnestness led him to speak in a somewhat higher key) by an occasional ‘*hush, hush! not so loud, man; the whole village can hear you.*’ All this sounded to me very strange and odd. I wonder what can possibly be the mystery between Mr. Thurlow and this man Burrowgrave?”

"If there is a mystery," answered Mr. Rose, "I suppose it is one into which you and I are not concerned to penetrate, Phil. Mr. Thurlow, as you are aware, has until very recently been engaged in commercial speculations, and it is natural that he should still have business-secrets with many persons. No doubt, the matter you heard referred to between him and his friend this morning was something of this description. Or, at any rate, it was some private affair of their own, which has no interest for any of us, and in regard to which it will scarcely be fitting for us to indulge curiosity."

"It strikes me as remarkable," continued Philip, "that Mr. Thurlow should have been accused of having practised deception, and also that he should have seemed, to a certain extent, to *admit the charge*! I must confess I don't quite like the look of this."

"I should not trouble my head about the circumstance, Phil, if I were you," replied the vicar. "It is never well to take notice of any stray words or disjointed sentences that one may chance to overhear, when people are talking together confidentially. One is always apt to draw from them some mistaken or unjust inference. Whatever the nature of the misunderstanding between

path. Philip Rose, who from his elevation witnessed the above, would have immediately hailed Mr. Burrowgrave and called his attention to the articles which he had dropped, but that gentleman had by this time advanced out of hearing, and was, in fact, on the point of joining the coach. It only remained, therefore, that Philip, after picking up the property of Mr. Burrowgrave, should hand it over to Mr. Thurlow and request him to forward it to his friend's address.

The documents, of which Mr. Burrowgrave had unwittingly lightened his pockets, consisted of a newspaper some three or four days old, and also of a letter, the wrapper or envelope of which was wanting. On turning the latter in his hand and glancing his eye over it hastily, Philip Rose noticed, with some surprise, that its contents were written in cypher. Now, there was something in this little circumstance which, taken in connection with the things that had come under his observation on the previous morning, served, at the moment, to revive in the mind of our young friend those misgivings with regard to Mr. Burrowgrave's character which he had recently been led to entertain, but which his father's very just and charitable reasonings on the subject had had the effect, in a great measure, of counteracting.

“Very strange,” he thought, “that this man’s correspondents should need to employ *cryptograph* in their communications with him! Depend upon it, there is some great mystery about this Burrowgrave, if one could only get to the bottom of it!”

While thus reflecting, his curiosity became once more so strongly excited that he found it difficult to repress a desire to ascertain, if possible, before delivering it up into the care of Mr. Thurlow, the purport of the document which he held in his hand. Now, it so happened that Philip Rose had been in the habit, during occasional leisure hours, of employing his ingenuity in the solution of problems and puzzles of various kinds, and had thus acquired, among other things, a tolerable proficiency in the art of reading hieroglyphics and cypher. Consequently, he had not spent more than a minute or so in looking at this paper of Mr. Burrowgrave’s, before he succeeded in finding the key to its secret meaning. This once obtained, the perusal of the contents became sufficiently easy. For the amusement of the *juvenile* reader I subjoin the original letter, as well as its interpretation.

“Tfwvfw, Emcqu Gswgu.

“Vsmc Ofz,—Kumg bw gus wmes fp pfcglws

mcs hfl mzfīg gumg hfl vfwg pfckmēv es gus
 xcfebysv csebggmwqsy? B umis zssw tffdbwn
 pfc guse sisc ybwqs Mwnstbwm zsqmes Ecy Ofz
 Ulwysc. Hfl kftv zs emcebsv fw gus pbeyg, bp
 B lwvscygfiv hflc tmyg tsggsc cbnugth. Gusw
 kumg bw gus kfctv qmw zs gus esmwbwn fp mtt
 guby vstmh? Hfl xcfebysv gf tsg es umis m
 ysggtsewg beesvbmgsth mpgsc gus siswg. Hfl
 mcs wfg gchbwn gf nbis es gus vflzts? Su? Wf,
 bwvssv, dwmis. guf' hfl zs, hfl mcs wfg ylqu m
 pfft my gumg, B pmwqh. Hfl dwfk isch kstt m
 ybwnts kubyxsc pcfe es kftv xtmqs hfl fw m
 ubnusc stsimgbfw gumw hfl mcs mezbgbfly gf
 mggmbw olyg hsg. Hfl umis wfg pfcnfggsw m
 gscgmbw tbggts srxtfbg mg H,— fws Mtt Ym-
 bwgy' Sis?—M kfcv gf gus kbys. Wfk, tsg es
 umis gus cubwf kbgufīg mwh efcs ulezlnnbwn;
 pfc B me zsnbwwbwn gf kmwg bg zmvth, my hfl
 mtcsmvh dwfk. B umis sextfhsv gus qhxusc pfc
 gube tsggsc, my B vfwg gmcch bg gf gus xfyg
 ehystp.

“ Hflce sisc,

OFUW VMKE.

“ Gf Ofz Ulwgsc, Sya.”

This was a cryptograph of the simplest and most ordinary character; and Philip Rose had presently jotted down its translation on the leaf of his pocket-book as follows:—

“London, March Tenth.

“Dear Job,—What in the name of fortune are you about, that you don’t forward me the promised remittances? I have been looking for them ever since Angelina became Mrs. Job Hunter. You would be married on the first, if I understood your last letter rightly. Then what in the world can be the meaning of all this delay? You promised to let me have a settlement immediately after the event. You are not trying to give me the double? Eh? No, indeed, knave though you be, you are not such a fool as that, I fancy. You know very well a single whisper from me would place you on a higher elevation than you are ambitious to attain just yet. You have not forgotten a certain little exploit at Y—, one All Saints’ Eve? A word to the wise. Now, let me have the rhino without any more humbugging; for I am beginning to want it badly, as you already know. I have employed the cypher for this letter, as I don’t carry it to the post myself.

“Yours ever, JOHN DAWS.

“To Job Hunter, Esq.”

It can well be believed that any unfavourable impressions, which Philip Rose had been led to form of Mr. Burrowgrave, were not dissipated on his becoming possessed of the contents of the

CHAPTER XIX.

“PENNY READINGS” AT SUNNYBROW.



REQUENT mention has been made of the deep interest felt by Mr. Thurlow in everything affecting the welfare of the little parish in which he had fixed his residence ; and there have also been particularised sundry ways in which that gentleman sought to be of service and assistance to the good vicar of Sunnybrow in the carrying out of his parochial system. For the most part, perhaps, or at any rate to a considerable extent, it has been in connection with religious questions, and consequently in a strain of some gravity, that I have had occasion to speak of or describe our friend in the foregoing pages ; and it may be needful perhaps to add a caution to my readers lest, judging exclusively by the somewhat *grave* representations which I have from time to time been led to make of Mr. Thurlow, they should gain a false

and erroneous impression in respect to the natural qualities and temper of Ellen Smyth's betrothed husband.

The truth is that Mr. Thurlow, so far from being what is termed a *stern nature*, or remarkable for any unusual solemnity of deportment, was indeed ordinarily characterised (excepting, that is to say, when the nature of the particular occasion or some special circumstance—as was the case, for example, at the time of his first introduction into our tale—demanded that it should be otherwise) by a gaiety of manner approaching, on occasion, even to festivity. Those who were intimately acquainted with him could not fail to have numerous opportunities of remarking this conspicuous feature in his character. And, that the general tone of Mr. Thurlow's disposition was entirely free from any admixture or tinge of *severity* will, I think, be sufficiently evidenced to my readers by the fact that, while he seemed to have at heart, above everything, the *improvement* (strictly so-called) of our villagers, he was yet none the less disposed, within due and reasonable limits, to sympathise with any schemes that might be set on foot with a view, more directly, to their *amusement*. So much so that he would not only encourage, and, indeed, occasionally take

part in, the football matches and other healthy out-door exercises and pastimes of the young men at Sunnybrow, but he had himself also about this time been the principal agent in the establishment of a series of evening-recreations for the people, known, if not generally, at least in some particular localities, by the designation of *Penny Readings*—a kind of entertainment in which instructive or humorous pieces, in prose and verse, are read aloud by competent persons, the same being alternated, or interspersed at intervals, with suitable selections of vocal or instrumental music.

Mr. Rose had, in the first instance, been disposed somewhat to question the expediency of his sanctioning the institution of these *Penny Readings*, from a view, doubtless, of the acknowledged difficulty of preserving entertainments of this description within the bounds of sobriety and respectability, and preventing them from ultimately degenerating either into absolute buffoonery or into that which is even still less to be desired !

On subsequent consideration, however, he prevailed upon himself to yield to what seemed a general desire, satisfied that, under the guidance of a person of Mr. Thurlow's discretion and good taste, the proposed recreations could not tend otherwise than to the edification, or, at least, the

innocent amusement, of those for whom they were provided. And so far as the opening performance was concerned, there was certainly nothing presented to the audience against which the most fastidious could take exception, or that could cause the worthy vicar to regret his compliance with the humour of his parishioners. The entertainment passed off in a manner perfectly satisfactory to all parties, and may be said, perhaps, to have proved (thanks to the kind aid of those who were best qualified to make it so) a *success*. Miss Smyth presided at the pianoforte and over the musical department generally; and we may feel quite sure that she would permit no room, so far as her own part extended, for adverse criticism.

Mr. Rose himself read one or two useful and instructive passages from the best prose authors; and his son Philip was by no means unsuccessful in his rendering of several poetic extracts of a humorous nature; while to Mr. Thurlow belonged the distinguishing merit of having so happily selected both his songs and his readings as to blend, in each instance, *amusement* and *improvement* together.

The lines which follow are given, not so much as a *specimen* of the latter named gentleman's performance, as rather on the ground of their

being an original ballad, expressly written by himself for this particular occasion. Whether such circumstance constitutes a sufficient plea and apology for my introduction of Mr. Thurlow's poetical attempt, I leave to my readers to pronounce.

THE PEDLAR.

Where yon sequester'd rural scene
Excludes ambitious strife,
A peasant with contentment's charm
Sweeten'd the toils of life.

Twin daughters dear his gentle care
Had nurtured from their birth,
Sweet pledges of his Susan's love,
Ere yet she fled from earth.

Gay Flora, as the queenly rose
Outshines each meaner flower,
So she all rivals far excell'd
In beauty's lustrous dower.

To Ruth belong'd more sober mien,
More unaffected grace;
As doth the peeping violet
Scarce lift its modest face.

One morn a trooper, at their gate
Alighting, ask'd his road;
Struck with such charms, he e'en a while
Would rest—till eve abode.

Skill'd in discourse, he pleasantly
Beguiled the fleeting day,
Talking, as match'd each fair one's taste,
On subjects grave or gay.

His visit o'er, "What deem'd ye now,"
Said Flora, "of our guest?
Admired ye not his rich brocade,
His star-bespangled vest?"

"Nay, Flora, other charms than these
Him to my fancy bind,
More pleased that 'neath his finery
He bears a noble mind."

Thus of their guest the sisters spake
With strangely differing view,
Applauding, one the gallant's sense,
The other his surtout!

To them he soon again repair'd,
Victorious from the field;
Courteous to both, he yet to Ruth
Did chief devotion yield.

Then, stung with sudden jealousy,
Swell'd Flora's haughty breast;
Nor could the slighted fair one brook
So deep wrong unredress'd.

On feign'd pretext of household wants,
She vow'd in sullen mood,
Henceforth from knightly intercourse
Her rival to exclude.

So, when their guest full oft return'd,
Flora he fain would woo,
Since Ruth he ne'er at leisure found
His suit to hearken to.

At length one day he, parting, cried,
"Alas ! my wooing's o'er ;
Far, far from hence our troop doth ride ;
Farewell ! to meet no more."

And thus he left the jealous fair
Her selfish part to rue ;
Who, while she thwarts her sister's love,
Her own sees thwarted too.

Full frequent, where the hamlets lie
Wide-scatter'd o'er the plain,
A pedlar now his bustling rounds
Pursued in quest of gain.

Oft as he pass'd the sisters' door,
Intent upon his trade,
He fain would halt, while to their view
His treasures he display'd.

A blithesome soul was he, who news
As well as wares could vend ;
Yea, one who e'en with business schemes
Would cares more tender blend.

And thus it fell out on a day—
He used so suasive art—
That while he lighten'd Flora's purse,
He stole from Ruth her heart.

The gentle lovers now betroth'd,
Each other's pledged for life,
'Twas next agreed, spring's opening day
Should bind them man and wife.

Meanwhile, through some unhop'd for chance
His eager march repress'd,
Yet once more 'neath the sisters' roof
Return'd their knightly guest.

Of Ruth's new-plighted faith advised,
Far from her side he stray'd,
And all his civil courtesies
Now to her sister paid.

Parting at eve, "our troop," said he,
"To-morrow hence doth ride ;
Yet, ere I join, I'll first return
To claim my chosen bride."

True to his word, in rich brocade,
He came, and spangled vest ;
But lo ! 'twas Ruth whose form he caught,
And clasp'd it to his breast !

"How ? what means this ?" both sisters cried,
"O fickler than the wind !
But nay, gay soldier, 'twere too late
To alter thus thy mind."

In answer, doff'd he now forthwith
His military guise,
And there, unmask'd, a pedlar stood
Before their wondering eyes !

"Nay," cried he, "neither trooper bold
Nor thrifty pedlar I;
The lord, I come, of these broad lands
That round your cottage lie.

"Well pleased with both, in one methought
To gain a blooming wife;
And early was dear Ruth preferr'd
As sharer of my life.

"But, when I found my humbler choice
Opposed with jealous guile,
It but remain'd to counterplot
With even deeper wile!"


But perhaps that *reading* which, although by no means claiming the first place in point of intrinsic excellence, yet appeared, notwithstanding, (owing probably to the highly effective manner in which it was delivered) to afford the *most general* satisfaction to our rustic assembly, was a piece contributed by a certain Mr. Goodfellow, a friend of Mr. Thurlow's, who had been specially invited from a distance to take part in and, as it was expected, to add considerable *éclat* to the proceedings of the evening. This, as it may probably be well appreciated by the younger portion of my readers, I will, with the kind indulgence of their elders, take the liberty of introducing at full length.

Mr. Goodfellow (whose elocution, I may say, was of the first order, and his acting and mimicry inimitable) had already more than once “favoured the company” during the progress of the entertainment, and more than once had resumed his seat amid thunders of applause; and now, by way of finish and conclusion to the whole, he yet once more came forward to the front of the small platform and half-read, half-recited to us the story of Captain Bold and the Goat as follows:—

General Merriman, for some time retired from the service of the English Army, had purchased a mansion and grounds in the vicinity of C—, where he resided and observed much hospitality in the olden style. Among the guests, whom he expected at his house and table one evening, was a Captain Bold, whose regiment was then quartered in the town above named. The Captain, being a young bachelor, put a few necessities in his carpet-bag, and went on foot from C— to the General’s residence. As he walked from the entrance gate along one of the avenues leading up to the house, he noticed, coming down a small declivity in front of him, an animal which proved, on his closer observation (as it approached), to be a he-goat with long horns and a white beard.

The Captain was a brave man and a soldier. He had more than once distinguished himself in action,

and had never been known to shrink in the face of danger. Yet, notwithstanding all his military valour, he had, from some cause or other, the greatest fear and horror of all horned cattle. I do not give any explanation of this fact, but merely state that it *was* the fact. Captain Bold durst not meet this goat! What was then to be done? Every moment was lessening the distance between them. Every moment the situation became more appalling. What was to be done? The Captain considered; but his consideration needed to be brief; for in less than half a minute the goat, supposing his intentions hostile, must be down upon him. What *was* to be done? The Captain got up into a tree. "I am saved," he said to himself: "I am delivered; and I can remain up here till the goat has gone past." But, as bad luck would have it, the goat did not go past! The Captain's manoeuvre, so far from removing him from the animal's observation, had rather drawn its attention, causing it to stop and look. The goat remained there quite stationary. Wonder and curiosity seemed to have riveted him to the spot. After a few minutes had elapsed, he even lay down at a short distance from the Captain's tower of refuge. "What shall I do?" thought the Captain, "if this abominable creature does not go away very soon? the time is spending, and I should even now scarcely be in time for dinner; and (oh, dear me) what am I to say in excuse for my unpunctuality? Horrible brute!" Such were



the dismal reflections in which Captain Bold indulged. But these were as nothing in comparison with his thoughts and sensations when, two or three minutes afterwards, he observed the *horrible brute* pawing at the foot of the tree, and threatening (so it appeared to his terrified imagination) to ascend for the purpose of assaulting him ! I may here inform the reader that this goat was a perfectly domesticated creature, tame and peaceable and well-intentioned, and, in reality, only wished to be sociable. He, no doubt, felt some sympathy for the Captain in his lonely and seemingly distressed condition. This view, however, had not occurred to Mr. Bold, who, on the approach of his supposed enemy, proceeded to slide along one of the branches, till he should be out of the reach of pursuit, and also with the intention of lowering himself from the extremity, and ‘making a run for it!’ Whilst this measure was in contemplation, the goat, disturbed and alarmed by the shaking of the tree, took the precaution, in his turn also, of quietly retiring a few paces. And he now stood exactly under the place where Captain Bold was suspended in mid-air, without the power (by reason of the inclination of the branch to which he clung) of retracing his road into the stronghold which he had just deserted. “This is most dreadful,” he exclaimed ; this “detestable goat still here, and I in a worse position than ever ! What am I to do ? I cannot hold on here long. Help !” he shouted. “Help ! Fire ! Thieves !

Police! Murder!" Each of which he roared one after another, partly with a view of bringing some one to the spot, and partly with a view of frightening the goat away. No response, however, seemed likely to be made to his varied summons, and as for the goat, his fears were not easily excited. It was the Captain, and not the goat, that was afraid! And now this unfortunate gentleman was on the very point, in sheer desperation and exhaustion, of letting go his grasp, and abandoning himself to a humiliating death, when the glad sound of an approaching footstep broke upon his ear. "Hollo!" he cried, "Hollo! Give me a hand here! Quick!"

"I am perfectly exhausted with holding on here," he said, as a labourer ran up and helped him to descend.

"Why didna ye jump down, sir?" asked the man.

"Jump down?" said the Captain. "Why didn't I jump down? Why, you see I couldn't jump down. I have a bad foot. I have a strained ankle; and I was afraid I might do myself an injury."

"But what brought ye up theer?" asked the labourer.

"I had lost my road," said the ready Captain.

"Lost yer road, sir!" exclaimed the other; "and how could you find it by going up theer?"

"Why you see," said the Captain, in a confidential sort of tone, "I was going to General Merriman's place, and I couldn't be sure about the direction; so I

got up this tree, thinking I might see the house from it."

"But you can see the house frae here," answered the man; "look yonner." And he glanced very suspiciously first at the Captain, and then at the tree, and then at the goat!

"Strange affair this," he thought, as the Captain hobbled alongside of him as far as the General's door; "strange affair; beats me hollow."

We pass over the Captain's reception at General Merriman's, and the apologies he made for his late arrival, together with the particulars of that evening's entertainment.

The next morning Captain Bold contemplated his return to C— not without some apprehensions of a recurrence of the previous day's adventure. "I don't know," he remarked to the General after breakfast, "how I shall manage the walk home; I feel my foot rather weak still." He said this, hoping that the General would offer to send him back in the carriage. The trick did not succeed.

"Well, sir," was the reply, "you have nothing to do but to lay your leg up on the sofa here to-day; we shall only be too glad to have your company; my wife and daughters will be charmed to act as nurses; and by to-morrow you will feel all right again; try this."

The Captain, having some engagements he desired to keep that morning, and, moreover, not caring to

pass a dull day in the character of an invalid, when, in truth, he was in perfectly good health, and capable of all the enjoyments of life, politely refused the General's hospitable offers, and determined to make the best of it.

"After all," he said, "I don't know; perhaps the gentle exercise would do my ankle as much good as harm; I've a very great mind to try; I'm not quite so stiff as I thought."

"Well, sir," said the General, "just as you like; you are welcome, you know, if you choose to stay; take care of yourself, however, and go gently; *and keep off the damp grass*," he added, as he shook the Captain by the hand in parting.

"All right," said the latter gentleman, as he limped from the house.

In returning to C—, Captain Bold preferred, either by way of a change or for private reasons, which the reader may be able to conjecture, to leave General Merriman's residence by a different direction to that which he had taken in coming. He made, therefore, for the turnpike through the grounds which lay on the opposite side of the house. After proceeding for some quarter of a mile, he came upon a small river or burn, over which was a stone bridge; and crossing this he struck into a footpath which led through some grass-land. He had scarcely reached the end of the first field, when something moving at a little distance in front of him engaged his attention. His

thoughts instinctively recurred to the goat and the horrors of his recent adventure. "Can it be possible?" he said, as hope and fear struggled for a few moments within him. Alas! it *was* possible. The object before him was none other than his formidable adversary of the preceding night. There was the goat again, coming on at a brisk canter! (For the goat's daily rambles were no more fixed and stereotyped in one direction only, than was the Captain's route to and fro between the old manor house and C—.)

"Oh, horror!" exclaimed Captain Bold, as, leaving his carpet-bag, he took to his heels and sped, with what haste his lameness permitted, towards the small bridge which he had a few minutes before passed over. He did not stop until he had recrossed it and was some distance on the farther side.

On looking back at length, he was greatly relieved in his mind to observe that the goat had discontinued the pursuit, and was seated quietly upon the bridge. The relief, however, was but temporary. The thought presently began to trouble him, how he was to get onwards; it was impossible for him to pass the bridge, while the enemy was in possession; and he could scarcely go back to C— by the other road, as his luggage must be recovered. In addition to this, he did not feel disposed again to pass the General's house, not knowing what explanation to give to any one he might meet with there. His situation (he

felt) was awkward in the extreme. "Well," he said at last to himself, "there's nothing to be done but to get on to a safe distance above the bridge, and wade through the burn." And he lost no time in carrying this plan into execution. He plunged boldly in, and had succeeded in making his way as far as the middle of the current, where the water rose as high as his waist, when, lo! suddenly two figures on a ledge of rock close by, and a well-known voice:

"Hollo! Captain, is that you? What are you thinking of, my dear sir? Are you gone clean mad?"

The inquirer was the General, who had come out for an hour's fishing with one of his guests.

"I couldn't find the bridge," said Captain Bold, who by this time had extricated himself from the waters and stood dripping on the opposite bank. "I couldn't make out exactly where the bridge was," he said, "and my ankle was so dreadfully painful that I thought I had best make the shortest cut to get back home."

"Alack-a-day!" exclaimed the General; "and where's your carpet-bag? Have you let it fall into the water?"

"What?" exclaimed Captain Bold; "what? Aye, bad luck to it! I must have lost the bag in getting across. Bad luck to it!"

"Hollo! sir," just at this moment shouted a countryman, appearing over a hedge behind the Captain. Captain Bold, turning round, recognised, with



small satisfaction, his deliverer of the previous night. The man had been working only a short distance off, and had witnessed the whole of the interesting scenes above depicted. "Hollo! sir," he called, "here's yer bag all right and safe; I picked it up for ye; I thought mebbies ye'd durstna gang back for't; but, bless your heart, ye had nae call to be sae feered, sir; it's the quietest innocentest critter livin'; I thought that there was summut that way with ye last night, when I helped ye doon out o' the tree. I notished ye was all of a dother."

Great was the wonder of General Merriman and his companion, as they listened to these disclosures.

"What does all this mean?" asked the former; "what in the world have you been about, Captain?"

This was a trying occasion for Captain Bold. It were impossible to describe his utter confusion. Valiant soldier as he was, he had not the moral courage to abide the impending investigations. "I will explain another time," he said; "I dare not stay now; these wet clothes are—dangerous." With this he seized his carpet-bag and dashed through the hedge out of sight, leaving the General and his friend to gather all particulars from the rustic, whom he cursed all the way to C— for his inopportune appearance.

There was (as you can easily suppose) great mirth that night, not only at the dinner-table of General Merriman, but also at the mess in C—, at the expense of Captain Bold. [*Loud and continued cheers.*]

This chapter having, I trust, sufficiently fulfilled its purpose of correcting certain erroneous ideas liable (as above noticed) to be entertained relatively to one of our leading personages, we may now consider ourselves at liberty, in our next, to resume once more the interrupted thread of our narrative.

CHAPTER XX.

MR. MAKEPEACE AGAIN.



IT had been Philip Rose's first intention to return Mr. Burrowgrave his property through the medium of their common friend Mr. Thurlow. The important discoveries, however, which he had since made, or which he supposed himself to have made, seemed to afford sufficient reason for his now preferring to adopt a different course. Allowing his surmises to be well-grounded, the testimony of the secret letter, he reflected, might be found ultimately to be very valuable, and might aid very materially in the establishment of the suspected person's guilt. Any scruples which, under ordinary circumstances, would have forbidden his retaining possession of that which did not belong to him, might fairly, he conceived, be set aside in this particular instance, where the interests of justice seemed to demand a deviation from the stricter

line of conduct. The cryptograph, therefore, he felt himself perfectly justified in keeping in his own hands for the present.

The restoration of the newspaper (otherwise unimportant) he purposed to make the pretext for ascertaining from Mr. Thurlow the address of his late visitor, on whose track it was obviously of the first importance to follow closely, so long as he continued the object of so grave suspicion. Previously, therefore, to his seeking an interview with his professional adviser, Mr. Makepeace, whom he had deemed it desirable to put in possession of all facts without much loss of time, he resorted, in the first instance, to Mr. Thurlow, with the object I have specified.

"Well, really," replied Mr. Thurlow to Philip's inquiries, "I am not sure that I am in a position to supply you with the information you ask for. At this moment I am quite ignorant of Mr. Burrowgrave's whereabouts. The fact is, his movements have been very uncertain of late, and I positively don't know of any address which would be likely to find him. When I have had occasion to write to him, I have usually, at his instruction, directed my letters to some post-office or other."

"Surely, this is very strange!" said Philip, with a somewhat searching glance at Mr. Thurlow. "Very strange! Eh?"

"Well, to tell you the truth," said Mr. Thurlow—who could not fail to read, in Philip's peculiarly suspicious look, something of what was passing through his mind, and who, doubtless, felt that his own credit demanded that some little explanation should be given of his apparent intimacy with Mr. Burrowgrave—"to tell you the truth, my friend's affairs are in some little embarrassment just at present. He is what is sometimes called in '*Queer Street*,' if you understand what I mean; and, until he can get things squared up, he finds it necessary to keep his place of retreat somewhat private. This is the state of the case."

"I suppose," asked Philip, his anxious interest forcing the question to his lips, "you consider him to be a person of integrity and respectability, although just at this moment he happens to be unfortunate?"

"Oh yes, most certainly," answered Mr. Thurlow. "My business-acquaintance and connection with him during many years enable me to speak with the utmost confidence as to his character. All, I believe, that can be said to his prejudice is that he has been a little imprudent, as men are apt to be who engage extensively in money-speculation."

"As he is playing this game of *hide and seek*

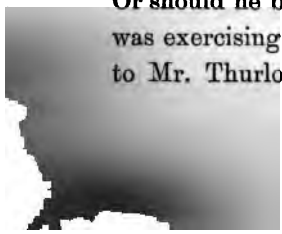
with his creditors, the name 'Burrowgrave' is probably only an assumed one?"

This adroit little interrogation fell in quite naturally with the train of conversation; and Philip, for reasons with which the reader is acquainted, was eager to seize his opportunity of introducing it.

"No," replied Mr. Thurlow, "it is not an *alias*. Burrowgrave is his real surname. At least, I expect so; I have never known him otherwise addressed during our acquaintance."

It was with an abstracted air and a somewhat hesitating manner that Philip Rose presently added: "I am sorry—rather sorry—you cannot direct me to Mr. Burrowgrave. There was something—something I was anxious to communicate to him."

Mr. Thurlow's last reply had had the effect of rather staggering Philip's recently-formed conclusions. Not an *alias*, but the man's own name! He might, after all, be entirely off the right track! He now felt considerable perplexity as to what course he had best follow. Should he allow the matter to rest, for the present, where it stood? Or should he be more explicit on the point which was exercising his private thoughts, and impart to Mr. Thurlow something of the true reasons



for which he had been interrogating him respecting his friend? He rather shrank from this latter alternative, through a fear lest he might be communicating suspicions, the entertainment of which the issue was possibly destined to show had been as unjust to Mr. Burrowgrave, as their expression could scarcely fail, in that case, to have been annoying to Mr. Thurlow himself.

As he continued musing and debating what he ought to do, Mr. Thurlow suddenly came to his relief and effected the resolution of his doubts as follows :—

“ Would it be too great a liberty in me to inquire whether it is a matter of any particular importance that you have to transact with Mr. Burrowgrave ?”

“ Oh, by no means,” answered Philip. “ I was merely anxious to restore to him a trifling portion of his property—a newspaper—which he dropped in leaving the village yesterday, and which I picked up on the footpath.”

“ Oh, that is all ?” said Mr. Thurlow. “ Well, you need not take any trouble about that, I should think. He can get it, if it is of any further use to him, when he comes here again. That will not be very long probably. I may tell you that I have invited him to be present here next month

at the wedding. He will act in the capacity of my *best man* on the occasion."

It was almost impossible for our young friend to avoid betraying some little degree of surprise—giving, in fact, a slight start—on hearing this announcement. (The reader can easily conceive that this might be the case). Recollecting himself, however, immediately, he contrived to answer in a tone of easy indifference: "Oh, indeed! Very well. That will be all right. He'll find his paper waiting for him, if he cares to read it when it's a month old."

After having brought his preliminary business with Mr. Thurlow to this satisfactory conclusion (for it certainly terminated more satisfactorily than there was room to augur at the commencement), Philip Rose now betook himself without delay to the residence of Mr. Makepeace, for the purpose of having a serious consultation with that learned member of the legal profession.

As Mr. Makepeace has already figured prominently before us in one of the earlier chapters, it will not be necessary for me here to reintroduce him or to refresh the reader's memory in regard to his peculiarities. I may proceed at once to give the particulars of the conversation which now took place between the lawyer and his client;

and this, perhaps, I shall do most advantageously in the actual words of the speakers themselves.

"You see now, Mr. Makepeace," said Philip, after that he had duly communicated all the facts of the case,—“you see now, we have got something in the shape of a presumption, at any rate.”

"More or less, no doubt," returned the legal gentleman.

"The important question is," continued the other: "Do these two names *Burrowgrave* and *Hunter*, denote one and the same individual?"

"That, of course, remains to be proved," answered Mr. Makepeace.

"Notwithstanding Mr. Thurlow's belief to the contrary," said Philip, "the name *Burrowgrave* may really be only an assumed one, after all."

"Yes, and the other name too, perhaps," suggested Mr. Makepeace; "*Hunter*, I mean."

"Exactly," said Philip. "The man may have fifty *aliases*, for anything one knows."

"Or a hundred," added the lawyer.

"Well," observed Philip after a pause, "whether the names are fictitious or genuine, they are the only material we have to work with, at this moment at least; and we must evidently turn them to all the account and advantage we possibly can. We must endeavour to find out, by means of

them, whether this Mr. Burrowgrave (or call him what you like) is the party we suspect him to be. That is the fact, isn't it? What do you say, Mr. Makepeace?"

"I say nothing, sir," was the rejoinder. "Pray, finish what you were observing."

"Well then, what I had to observe," continued Philip, "amounts simply to this: let us see if we cannot put this and that together and make out something definite—something that will serve to direct our course of proceeding in this matter. It is absolutely necessary that we should have something intelligible to go by."

"We must have that, of course," said Mr. Makepeace, "if we are to be in a position to do anything."

"Now, in the first place," said Philip, "we may take for granted, perhaps, that the person addressed in the secret letter by the name of Job Hunter either committed the Littlegate murder or was accessory to it. The expressions used are very *particular*, you see; and it is hardly possible to conceive of them as having any other reference. Eh?"

"Well?" said Mr. Makepeace.

"Very well," resumed Philip. "Now, you will recollect that, on the occasion of our former con-

sultation, we agreed that the owner of the bullet-mould—the man Pilbreth, namely, who had deserted his family—was a person strongly to be suspected in connection with that crime. Hence there arises, surely, a certain probability that Pilbreth and Hunter may be one and the same individual !”

“Very possibly,” said Mr. Makepeace.

“Very well, then,” continued Philip ; “the question is whether our friend Mr. Burrowgrave be not also one and the same individual with the aforementioned two ? The circumstance of a cryptograph letter, addressed to Hunter, having been found in his possession, would seem almost to lead to such an inference.”

“There is unquestionably some ground for a suspicion of this kind,” rejoined Mr. Makepeace, “it is impossible, indeed, to deny it.”

“What should be done now, do you think, Mr. Makepeace ?” inquired Philip.

“Ah ! there you touch the great difficulty of the case,” replied the legal gentleman. “What is to be done ? That’s the problem for us to solve, if possible.”

“Well,” said the other, “there can be no doubt, I think, that we ought to ascertain at once, by interrogating Mrs. Pilbreth, how far her husband’s

outward description tallies with that of Mr. Burrowgrave. It would be a very important and significant fact, were it to be found that they agreed together in appearance."

"There can be no question about that," said Mr. Makepeace.

"And, continued Philip, "I should make a similar investigation also with regard to the person styling himself *Job Hunter*. I mentioned to you, I think, that he had been seen by a friend of mine at the '*Little Apollo*,' in the character of the '*Elaborate Liar*.'"

Mr. Makepeace inclined his head, by way of assent.

"This would appear, then, to be our immediate course, Mr. Makepeace, would it not?" asked Philip.

"I quite think," answered the professional man, "that the sooner one instituted some inquiry of this sort, the better it might be."

"Very well, then," said Philip, "I will make this my first business on going into town tomorrow. But now, with regard to Mr. Thurlow, do you think it would be advisable to admit him into our counsels?"

"It might, or it might not," was the answer. "One cannot tell, you see."

"Perhaps, before doing this, we had better wait and see how far our suspicions of Mr. Burrowgrave are likely to be confirmed?" suggested Philip.

"I shouldn't wonder if you were right," replied the lawyer. "I shouldn't wonder, indeed."

"Especially," added the other, "as Mr. Thurlow cannot enlighten us at all as to this man Burrowgrave's whereabouts."

"Exactly," said Mr. Makepeace. "He cannot help us at all, it would seem."

"It is a very fortunate circumstance," said Philip, "that Burrowgrave is coming down to the wedding. We shall then be able to lay hold of him and detain him on suspicion."

"What?" said Mr. Makepeace.

"We shall be able to arrest him, I say," repeated Philip.

"Well, that will depend on circumstances, of course," said Mr. Makepeace.

"To be sure," returned Philip; "provided, I mean, there should appear to be a sufficiently strong case against him."

"Otherwise, we couldn't act, you know," nodded the lawyer, "we couldn't possibly."

"True," assented the other.


"Obviously," added Mr. Makepeace.

Their consultation having dwindled to this point, it presently occurred to the two gentlemen that the matter, which had brought them together, had now been sufficiently gone into, and that, for the present at least, it might not be necessary further to prolong the discussion.

They separated accordingly, after Philip Rose had once more undertaken to seek out and examine Mrs. Pilbreth, together with the other witness above referred to, and had also promised to bring Mr. Makepeace early intelligence as to the results of his inquiry.

CHAPTER XXI.

INVESTIGATIONS.

N arriving in town on the following morning, Mr. Philip Rose turned his steps without delay in the direction of the Edgeware Road, where Mrs. Pilbreth continued to reside. He found the good woman at home, engaged in her usual employment of starching and ironing linen.

"Well," he said, after he had taken a seat by the fireside and exchanged the first few commonplace civilities, "I suppose you are still without any tidings of your husband?"

"Oh, yes, sir," was the answer; "I have heard nothing more of him, and I have no expectation now of doing so. You may be sure he'll not come in the way of a wife and family, if he can help it."

"Ah, no," said young Mr. Rose; "I dare say not. There is a question I wished to ask you,"

he added, after a short pause ; “your name, I believe, is *Pilbreth* ? You always gave me to understand so, I think. Now, might I inquire if that is the real name of your husband, or only a fictitious one ?”

(Philip, on putting the above question, briefly stated to Mrs. Pilbreth that he had certain good reasons for making such an inquiry, although he did not consider it needful to explain to her, just then, the precise nature of those reasons.)

“Oh, yes, sir, certainly,” was the reply ; “at least, to the best of my belief ; “we have always both gone by that name since our marriage.”

“You never remember to have heard your husband addressed by the name of *Hunter* ?”

“No, sir, never.”

“Nor to have seen him use that name in signing himself ?”

“No, sir, never.”

“What was your husband’s Christian name ?” continued Philip.

“Joseph, sir,” was the prompt rejoinder.

Philip mused thoughtfully for a few seconds. He felt himself slightly checked by the woman’s replies so far.

“At least,” added Mrs. Pilbreth, “I ought, perhaps, to have said *Joe*, sir. He never got anything but *Joe Pilbreth* in a general way.”

“ Ah !” said Philip, looking up quickly at the speaker. “ *Joe,—Joe !*” A little gleam of light seemed suddenly to break upon him. It flashed across his mind that *Joe Pilbreth* and *Job Pilbreth* were not very dissimilar in sound, when rapidly uttered ; and that their confusion might be a thing possible, even to Mrs. Pilbreth herself ! He made therefore a venture here :

“ *Joe Pilbreth*, you say ? Not *Job Pilbreth* ? You’re sure it’s not *Job* for *Joe* ? Eh ? Which is it now ? *Job*, is it not ? You’ve heard your husband called *Job*, (haven’t you ?) sometimes ?”

“ Well, really, sir,” answered the woman, “ excuse me saying so, but you’re a knowing young gentleman, certainly ! Now that you’ve mentioned it, I *have* noticed my man called that way by some of his companions—spoken to as *Job*, I mean. But I never paid any attention to it. I only thought it was their ignorance and a rough way they had of saying the word. I never thought of his name being anything else than *Joe*. I always called him *Joe* myself, and he always answered to *Joe*. But his right name may be *Job*, for all that, as you say, sir. I shouldn’t wonder. Dear me ! and a Scripture name, too ! Well, really, and to think of this, now ! How ever did

you get to know such a thing, sir? What *can* you have heard about Pilbreth?"

"I have a particular reason for making these little inquiries about your husband, Mrs. Pilbreth," answered Philip, "but I am not quite at liberty at present to explain my reason to you. You may be sure that it is nothing of importance for you to know, or I should tell you all about it."

"Certainly, sir," returned Mrs. Pilbreth; "I hope no offence in what I said?"

"Oh, none whatever," said Philip. "Now, what sort of a person is your husband to look at?" he continued. "Would you describe his appearance to me, as accurately as you can?"

"Yes, sir, surely. He is a tallish man, rather slight-built, pale-complexioned, with a large nose, and with reddish hair, and a good deal of it, too, both on his head and about his face."

"Ah, indeed! You are quite exact in all these points, now?" said Philip, as he pondered over the above description. "How old is he?" he then added; "or how old does he look?"

"I really can't be sure of his precise age, sir; but I should think he must be a good way over thirty; nearer forty, perhaps."

"You say his hair is of a reddish hue?"

"Yes, sir; at least a sort of *ginger*; not ex-



actly what one calls red, but something nigh to it."

"Well," said Philip Rose, after going over carefully again with Mrs. Pilbreth the various particulars of her husband's description, "well, I am obliged to you for this information. I may possibly need to call on you again in a few days. I suppose I shall be sure to find you here?"

"Oh, yes, sir; I never go far from the house; and the people next door will always be able to say where I am, if I should have stepped out anywhere."

"Very well, Mrs. Pilbreth; good bye, for the present; I dare say I shall be paying you a visit again before long; I often pass this way, now that I have come into Wellesley Street."

Philip Rose now took his leave, and returned, as soon as possible, to his rooms, for the purpose of giving matters some little consideration.

The result of his conference with Mrs. Pilbreth was not altogether so decisive, perhaps, as he could have wished. The facts she had stated to him were, doubtless, in a great measure, such as to confirm the suspicions that had recently taken root within his mind. In particular, the admission which had been elicited from her, on the subject of the man's Christian name, could not

fail (considering the rareness of the name *Job*) to yield a certain presumption in favour of his identity with that particular Job to whom the cryptograph had been addressed, and whom Philip Rose had, with some appearance of probability, concluded to be Mr. Burrowgrave. But, unfortunately, in one leading and not unimportant particular, the agreement failed. While Mr. Burrowgrave was tall in stature and of slender frame, his complexion pallid, and his features, the nose especially, somewhat prominent, his hair, instead of being light in colour, was jet black ; and his face, moreover, was entirely destitute of anything in the shape of beard.

At the same time, notwithstanding this somewhat serious discrepancy, it was also true that, *in the more essential points, and where there were no facilities for a disguise*, Mr. Burrowgrave's appearance corresponded very closely with the description given by Mrs. Pilbreth of her husband. So that Philip Rose, after duly weighing every circumstance, came once more to the conclusion that he might probably be on a true scent. It was quite possible, he argued, for Mr. Burrowgrave (or Pilbreth, or Hunter), when he assumed a new character and a new name, to assume also a new appearance ; and this he could always do



to some extent, by varying the style of his dress, by providing himself with false hair, and by means of numerous other little expedients of the like nature.

Viewing matters in this light, he resolved still further to prosecute the investigations which he had commenced ; and with this object he now went forth in quest of his friend Mr. Andrewes, who had been his next-door neighbour prior to his recent change of residence, and who, on one occasion (the reader will recollect), had desired his company to the *Little Apollo* theatre, for the purpose of hearing Mr. Job Hunter in the character of the ‘ *Elaborate Liar*.’

On reaching Mr. Andrewes’s apartments, Philip Rose was somewhat disappointed to find that that gentleman was not in a position to afford him the information he had been in hopes of obtaining from him. Mr. Andrewes regretted that he had not (owing to a little circumstance, which we mentioned at the time,) had an opportunity of paying his intended visit to the *Little Apollo*.

“ But what a strange fellow you are, Rose !” he said. “ You gave me a lecture against theatre-going, I remember ; and now you say it was a pity I was not there !”

“ I only meant that with a particular reference,”

answered Philip ; “ not generally. The fact is I have a most important reason for wishing to ascertain what sort of a person this Mr. Job Hunter is to look at.”

“ Oh, indeed !” replied Andrewes. “ Why do you want to know that ?”

“ Well, the reason is a private one, and I am not sure that I am at liberty to name it to you.”

“ Oh, all right,” answered the other. “ Well, I cannot tell you anything about him, of course ; but I believe you will have no difficulty in finding some one who can. Ainsley went to hear the performance, I know for a fact.”

“ Where is Ainsley now ?” inquired Philip.

“ At home, I think,” was the answer ; “ but he talked of coming along here this evening. If you choose to stay a short time, you will see him. He will be able to give you all particulars, no doubt.”

Philip Rose agreed to this arrangement, and waited for their friend Ainsley, who was not very long before he made his appearance.

To shorten matters : it was presently ascertained that the individual who had acted the part of the *‘Elaborate Liar’* accurately corresponded, in respect of personal appearance, with the gentleman known by Philip Rose as Mr. Burrowgrave ! He had been a tall, sallow-faced man,

with a prominent nose, closely shaven, and having his head covered with a profusion of bushy black hair.

Mr. Ainsley's testimony had, of course, the effect very materially of strengthening the opinion which Philip Rose had all along inclined to entertain, that Mr. Burrowgrave, in one way or another, had been closely concerned in the perpetration of the Littlegate murder. Such a conclusion appeared to him, indeed, to be almost *compelled*, when he now recapitulated the several items of evidence, and estimated them one in connection with the other: the contents of the secret letter implied that one known by the name of Job Hunter had been guilty of a capital offence, probably the very crime in question; this letter had been seen in the possession of Mr. Burrowgrave, and might be presumed to address that individual; the discovery of the bullet-mould, in which the fatal ball had unquestionably been cast, pointed to Mrs. Pilbreth's husband as the guilty party; Pilbreth's Christian name was probably Job; this same Pilbreth, in all respects save one, corresponded outwardly to Mr. Burrowgrave; the person who acted the '*Elaborate Liar*,' and who on that occasion styled himself Mr. Job Hunter, corresponded, in *every* respect,

to Mr. Burrowgrave ; many circumstances of Mr. Burrowgrave's case at present were such as to engender suspicion ; Mr. Thurlow's account of his friend had been far from a satisfactory one, etc.

It was true that the disagreement (in one solitary particular) between the description of Mr. Burrowgrave and Mrs. Pilbreth's portrait of her husband continued unreconciled. But this *difficulty of the hair*, as we before mentioned, appeared to admit of a sufficiently probable solution. *Mr. Burrowgrave*, there could be little doubt, *wore a wig* ! So that on the whole, all points duly weighed and considered, it remained Philip Rose's firm persuasion that this Mr. Burrowgrave would be able, before very long, to be identified with the murderer (or, at any rate, with one of the murderers) of his cousin, the Honourable Mrs. Smyth.

Taking leave now of his two friends, Philip again sought Mrs. Pilbreth, whom he briefly interrogated (a question he had forgotten to include in his former inquiries) as to the nature of the occupations by means of which her husband had been accustomed to obtain a livelihood ; and, in particular, whether he had ever rendered his services in connection with the theatre ?

He was informed by her that ' Pilbreth had



not, to her knowledge, been a stage performer himself, but that many of his companions had been in that line of business.'

This additional point ascertained, he now lost no time in returning to Sunnybrow, for the purpose of acquainting Mr. Makepeace with the amount of success that had attended his recent investigations.

CHAPTER XXII.

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING.



ONE day, about this time, it happened that our vicar and his ward had occasion to go into town for the purpose of conferring with their London solicitor in respect to some family money-matters of importance.

The stage-coach in which they made their short journey had at length traversed the suburbs, and was now closely approaching the hostelry which formed its usual daily destination, when, all on a sudden, Mr. Rose, who had for some moments been gazing out through the open window upon the busy scenes which thickened around them on every side, pointing with his finger across the road, exclaimed: "Why, surely that must be Adolphus's friend whom I see yonder—Mr. Burrowgrave, I mean—surely it must be! It certainly looks very like his figure—does it not? Oh, yes, of course; it *is* he, beyond all question."

"Oh, yes," answered Ellen, as she looked attentively in the direction indicated—"Mr. Burrowgrave—there he is, to be sure. And, oh, what a pity Adolphus is not with us! Only yesterday he was saying that he wanted so much to see Mr. Burrowgrave, but did not know exactly where to find him just now. What a pity he is not here!—But, oh!—Oh, dear me!—Oh, cousin, cousin!"

And here, catching her breath and clinging to the arm of her guardian, she remained for an instant with her eyes fixed and riveted, in visible alarm and terror, upon some object in the street before her.

"What, my dear? What is it?" asked Mr. Rose anxiously. "What is it you see? Dear me! you are quite pale and ill! What is it, Ellen? Do speak."

"Oh, don't you see—don't you see that person he is talking to there?" she replied, referring to a shabbily-dressed, somewhat disreputable-looking individual, who was then standing alongside of Mr. Burrowgrave, apparently in conversation with him.

"Yes, well?"

"Why—why, it's that dreadful man who attacked me in the wood! Oh, dear!"

“Nonsense, my dear child !”

“Oh, yes, cousin ; oh, yes, indeed ; the very same. I could never forget or mistake such a face as that. There he is—the very same. Oh, what shall we do ?”

“Well, my dear, are you really *certain* it is he ? Are you *perfectly* certain, now ? Eh ?”

“Of course, I am ; positive,” was the decided and somewhat impatient rejoinder.

“We must see to this at once, Ellen,” answered Mr. Rose. “Driver,” he called loudly, “pull up ; I get out here.”

As they, presently, on the door being opened, descended to the road and hastily reckoned with the coachman, they were without difficulty perceived by Mr. Burrowgrave, whose attention the sudden and unexpected stoppage of the vehicle had naturally attracted towards the spot. That gentleman at once acknowledged them, politely raising his hat to the young lady. He then, immediately, inserting his hand into his pocket and extracting thence a *silver* coin, might be seen to deliver the same to his companion ; from whom, after a brief word of dismissal, he now turned away, and proceeded to walk forward in the direction of our friends from Sunnybrow.

“Oh, Mr. Burrowgrave, how do you do ?” ex-

claimed the vicar, who, followed by Ellen, was now rapidly advancing to meet him. "Do you know," he continued, with some agitation of manner, and without waiting for the interchange of civilities, "who that person is you were conversing with but a moment or two ago?"

"No," replied the other, "except that he is a tramp, asking alms—one of the *sturdy beggar* species. Indeed he was so excessively troublesome, that I was fain to give him a trifle in order to rid myself of his importunities. Not that I by any means approve of the system of indiscriminate charity. Indeed, far from it."

"Well, but, do you know," said Mr. Rose, "that man, unless we are strangely mistaken, is the very same fellow who committed an assault on my cousin here some few months ago, of which probably you have heard from your good friend Thurlow, to whom we had all reason to feel so much indebted for his brave conduct on the occasion."

"You don't say so? Impossible!" answered the other, as he regarded our friends with an astonished and interrogating glance. "Really?"


On receiving from Ellen the assurance that such was undoubtedly the case—"Well, then," he said, "we had best look sharp after this. Where is

the fellow?" And hereupon he cast his eye rapidly over the street in all directions.

"He went through yonder opening only half a minute since," said the vicar; "I saw him hurry away as I was standing by the coach-door paying the fare. I suspect he had caught sight of us, and, if he recognised Ellen, he would doubtless lose no time in beating a retreat."

Mr. Burrowgrave instantly flew to the spot denoted by Mr. Rose, which commanded the view of a long narrow alley. Returning presently, he said: "I see no vestige of him whatever. He has got himself conveyed out of sight somewhere. All we can do is to set the police on his track without a moment's delay; and I should trust he would be pounced upon before the day is over. Hollo, there!" he called to a constable who, fortunately, at that moment made his appearance round an adjoining corner. "Here, here, be quick," he beckoned impatiently.

On the officer joining them, our friends made to him a brief statement of the case, and also supplied him with as accurate as possible a description of the general appearance of the individual to be searched for. Beseeching him to lose no time and spare no exertions, they added the promise of an ample reward, should he succeed in tracing the scoundrel to his place of concealment.



It was the further suggestion and recommendation of Mr. Burrowgrave that they should not rely on the skill and efforts of a solitary officer, but that one of the two gentlemen should at once go and personally lay the matter before the superintendent of police in that district, who would give such directions to the metropolitan detective force as could scarcely fail to ensure, ere very long, the discovery and apprehension of the culprit. This advice (I need scarcely say) readily commended itself, and was duly acted upon by Mr. Rose.

Mr. Burrowgrave, having thus rendered such assistance in this matter as lay in his power, now took leave of our worthy friends, until he should have the pleasure (as he hoped he should do very shortly) of meeting them again under much more interesting and pleasing circumstances !

I regret to be compelled once more to state that notwithstanding the vigilance and activity of the London police, the perpetrator of the audacious outrage, which forms the subject of our twelfth chapter, was again a second time successful in evading detection, and baffling the ends of justice.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE SNARES ENCOMPASS MR. BURROWGRAVE.



IN the course of a few hours, after his last interview with Mrs. Pilbreth, Philip Rose was once more closeted with his professional adviser, Mr. Makepeace. Inasmuch as the reader has already been supplied with a sufficient specimen of the sagacious counsels of the latter-named gentleman, it will not be needful perhaps for me again to draw out a *verbatim* report of the conference which now took place between them. Every end will be abundantly answered, in all probability, if I confine myself to a brief statement of the result of their deliberations.

The conclusion, then, was reached without much difficulty, that in order to the presumptive evidence against Mr. Burrowgrave being converted into anything like positive proof, so as to furnish a safe ground for legal action, it would



be necessary that the above individual should be regularly identified by Mrs. Pilbreth and by Mr. Ainsley; by the former, as her actual husband; by the latter, as the veritable Mr. Job Hunter. The question now arose, how such identification was capable of being effected, seeing that the *whereabout* of the suspected party was at present entirely unknown, and that there existed no clue which would be likely to lead to its speedy discovery. It was absolutely essential that Mrs. Pilbreth and Mr. Ainsley should see Mr. Burrowgrave; but when and where they could have the opportunity of doing so—this was now the difficulty.

After due consideration on the part of the two gentlemen in conference together, it appeared that the only course open to them was patiently to await the time when Mr. Thurlow's approaching marriage with Miss Smyth should shortly involve Mr. Burrowgrave's return to the village.

It was true that the occasion of a family wedding was but very awkwardly and inauspiciously connected with such business as Philip Rose and Mr. Makepeace had in train; all the more so when the particular capacity, in which the 'unfortunate victim' (if we may, by anticipation, so denominate Mr. Burrowgrave) would need to act

on the occasion, was further taken into the account. Yet, granting this, how could so valuable an opportunity, and one, moreover, which might not be apt to repeat itself, of detecting and securing a great criminal (a murderer, it might even prove), be possibly allowed to remain unembraced, consistently with a proper regard to the requirements of public justice? No; there was obviously no option at all in the matter. It was determined, accordingly, that the requisite witnesses should be, in due course, summoned to the spot, and that (failing any better resource) Mr. Burrowgrave's presence at the approaching marriage-ceremony should be taken advantage of, for the purpose of settling the important question of that gentleman's identity with the *quondam* possessor of the bullet-mould, and with the '*Elaborate Liar!*'

It was next agreed, after full discussion of the point, that it would be advisable to allow both the vicar and Mr. Thurlow to remain in ignorance of the arrangement which had thus been concerted for the *identification* of Mr. Burrowgrave. In the first place, neither gentleman, probably, was in a position to render any assistance in the case. Their admission into confidence, therefore, could be of no practical utility. But there was another and still stronger reason for the observance of

this secrecy. Supposing Mr. Burrowgrave should prove after all *not* to be the guilty person for whom he was at present taken, but a different and entirely innocent man (and this seemed at any rate within the limits of possibility, more especially when the generally favourable testimony Mr. Thurlow had been able to bear to his friend's character was kept in mind) ; supposing this—supposing Mr. Burrowgrave's innocence, instead of his guilt, to become ultimately established, then, surely, the fewer individuals whose minds had been disturbed and distressed with apprehensions and misgivings in respect to him, and to whom he had been an object of groundless and unjust suspicion—the fewer, surely, the better !

There remained yet another point of some importance to be considered and arranged between Mr. Makepeace and his client.


The reader will duly recollect that on the evening of the 31st of October, in the year 18**, three young men were driven out in a post-chaise from the city of York as far as a certain roadside tavern, commonly known by the designation of the *Half-way House*. No doubt was ever entertained that these individuals (who immediately disappeared from the locality) had been concerned in the Littlegate murder.

Now, *supposing other inferences correct*, it might also be presumed with tolerable certainty that one of the above-named three had been our Mr. Burrowgrave. If so, that gentleman might, very probably, be capable of recognition by the person who had been employed to drive the vehicle on the occasion in question. It was hardly to be believed that the coachman Richards's impression of the three travellers, who had been his fare on that ever-memorable night, would speedily become effaced, in the midst of circumstances so calculated to engrave their descriptions indelibly on his recollection.

Taking this view of the matter, Mr. Makepeace and Philip Rose finally agreed that the aforesaid driver (provided he were still living and forthcoming) should be immediately communicated with, and his testimony, which might be specially valuable, secured in addition to that of the other two witnesses.

The arrangement of this last point having now, at length, brought the business of their conference to a termination, the two gentlemen, accordingly, separated for the present.

Before closing the present chapter, it remains that I should acquaint the reader with the result of Philip Rose's inquiry and search after the man



Richards, for the purpose of which he made, in the course of the ensuing week (by Mr. Makepeace's direction) a journey into the distant county of Yorkshire. After some little trouble he succeeded in discovering the person he was in quest of, among the inmates of an almshouse, in the cathedral city. Richards, who was now a very old man, although in feeble bodily health, yet retained the full possession and use of all his mental faculties. After briefly introducing himself, and stating, generally, the object of his visit, Philip Rose then proceeded to put to him such questions as the following :—

“You recollect, Richards (do you not ?), the night of the 31st of October, in the year 18**, when the Littlegate murder was committed ?”

“Oh, yes, sir ; very well ; I should not forget that night in a hurry.”

“You recollect, also,” (continued Philip) “taking out the three murderers (as they were believed to be) as far as the ‘Half-way House ?’”

“You may be sure I’ve not forgotten that, sir,” was the reply.

“Now, you would probably know these persons again, if you saw them, wouldn’t you ?”

“I cannot say for *all* of them, sir ; but I should know *one* of them again, directly : the one

that engaged the coach, and paid the fare. He seemed the principal party of the three ; and I exchanged a few words of talk with him."

"Would you be good enough," said Philip, "to describe to me this individual's appearance, as nearly as you can recall it?"

"He was a tall, spare-bodied chap, with palish cheeks, and a big hooked nose, if I recollect."

"You are sure his nose was hooked?" asked Philip.

"I couldn't be quite positive about the exact shape of it, sir ; but any way, it was a big nose."

"Well,— and his hair, what colour was that?" continued the other.

"A kind of sandy, I think, or reddish, so far as I could see it for his hat."

This reply no longer created the same perplexity in the mind of Philip Rose, which it had done on a former occasion. The supposition of Mr. Burrowgrave's having latterly assumed the disguise of a peruke, had been accepted (as the reader knows) as a sufficient reconciliation of any discrepancies in the evidence collected as to the particular colour of the suspected person's hair. Indeed, had Richards' statement been to any other effect than the above, it must have served only to weaken the case against Mr. Burrowgrave,



by casting fresh doubt on that gentleman's identity with the owner of the bullet mould, which latter (it had been trusted) was quite a settled point. So that, on the whole, the answer of the old man was in reality the most satisfactory that Philip could have hoped for.

"Now, you are sure, Richards, that you would know this man again, if you saw him? You are sure that you would know him, however he might be dressed, and even though he were disguised by means of a false head of hair? You would know him, that is, if you but saw his face clearly, and the outline of his figure? Eh? You could swear to him?"

"I could swear to him, sir, before the *Admiralty*," was the somewhat animated and energetic rejoinder.

Philip Rose smiled.

"Well, but," he said, "could you swear to him before *God*?"

"Yes, sir, answered the old man, with decision; "before *God*!"

"Very well, then, Richards," said Philip, "I may now proceed to the business that has brought me here."

Philip Rose hereupon proceeded clearly and fully to explain to Mr. Richards the nature of the service

he was expected to render in the cause of justice. This done, he finally made all necessary arrangements for the old gentleman's being safely conveyed to Sunnybrow on the evening before the day upon which his presence would be needed there.

Our young friend had thus succeeded in securing the attendance of three valuable witnesses, viz., Richards, Mrs. Pilbreth, and Mr. Ainsley,—the combined testimony of whom, he felt persuaded, could not fail speedily to unmask and drag to the light of day the long concealed Littlegate murderer, in the person of the mysterious Mr. Burrowgrave !

Having duly made all preparations for the coming *exposé*, and having also guarded (so far as was possible) against anything in the shape of miscarriage, he now returned to the vicarage of Sunnybrow, and there awaited, with eager interest, and burning anxiety, the tremendous issue !

CHAPTER XXIV.

MR. BURROWGRAVE'S WIG.



OME two or three weeks had slowly passed, and it was now at length the actual eve of the great occasion.

Every needful preparation for the morrow had long since been made by all the parties concerned ; and all, though with somewhat differing thoughts and feelings, shared one common attitude of high expectancy.

The title, which is prefixed to these pages, would seem to suggest to me,—indeed it would seem almost to *engage* me, to take here, at this so interesting and critical point of the family history, some brief glance at the several inmates of our little vicarage.

There is, then, Philip. But why should I further speak of him ? His sentiments, at the present juncture, the reader must surely have sufficiently gathered already, in the attentive

perusal of the immediately foregoing chapters. Passing him by, therefore, I turn, instead, to Ellen.

How shall I speak fittingly of *her*,—the bride elect? It is not an easy task. Brevity, then, shall atone for whatever may seem lacking in appropriateness.

Although Ellen's acquaintance with Mr. Thurlow had been but of (comparatively) short duration, yet she had early begun to admire the character of her affianced husband, and those excellent and noble qualities, of which his words and actions, on all occasions, were the evidence; and she had now learned to behold in him the one true object of her heart's affectionate interest, and to yearn towards him with all the deep, strong passion of a woman's love.

With trembling nerve and beating breast, she now awaited, in rapturous anticipation, the morrow—that should make her *his* for ever!

The good vicar sat in his library alone, pensively musing. There was sadness, mingled with pleasure, in his heart, and on his brow. He was about to lose from his side that lovely, amiable girl, who had been for so many years the joy and ornament of his home;—who had been to him as a beloved daughter, whom he had reared and


cherished, with all a parent's fond solicitude, from the early days of childhood. The hour had now come when he must part with her ; and full sadly did his heart sink within him as he thought hereupon. Yet, on the other hand (he reflected) he was about to resign her to the care of one who loved her not less tenderly than himself ; one, moreover, of whose moral worth and goodness of character he had the fullest persuasion, and whom he had long regarded, not only with feelings of high esteem, but with those of the warmest and sincerest affection. Yes ; Ellen was about to become the wife of his true-hearted, noble-minded friend, Mr. Thurlow. He could well part with her, he felt, to *him*. He need not fear or grieve for one who was to be *his* wife.

It had ever been Mr. Rose's anxious wish to see the young lady, who had been entrusted to his care and protection, suitably and advantageously disposed of in marriage ; and now that this desire was on the eve of so satisfactory accomplishment, it was with a relieved feeling as of much heavy responsibility removed, together with a devout sense of thankfulness to that good Providence which had directed matters to so happy an issue, that he now secretly breathed

the fervent heart-felt prayer that Heaven's choicest blessings might abundantly attend the earthly lot of the youthful couple presently to be united by him at the altar.

While he continued occupied (as it was natural he should) with these and kindred reflections, Mr. Rose, suddenly perceiving the presence of Mr. Thurlow in the lane which skirted the extremity of the garden, could not resist an impulse to step out and join the object of his recent thoughts.

"Well," he said, as they strolled together arm in arm, "well, my dear Adolphus, you have not now very much longer to wait, and exercise patience. Another day, and you will be in possession of your treasure. And a treasure, believe me, you will find in dear Ellen; one that you can never prize too highly. But, by the way, Thurlow, you never understood, I think, the reason of our postponing the marriage, which had been fixed for yesterday, until to-morrow. I intended to give you the explanation of this change, but our conversation the other day was interrupted, you will remember. Well, the reason was this:—Yesterday was the 31st, you know. That particular day, I may tell you, is the anniversary of a very sad event which took place in



our family many years ago ; and it is always associated with memories of a most painful nature to all of us, but especially to Ellen herself."

"Indeed !" said Mr. Thurlow, with an inquiring look of surprise.

Hereupon, Mr. Rose briefly communicated the principal circumstances connected with the violent death of his unfortunate cousin.

"You shock me, indeed, sir," said Mr. Thurlow, who had listened with breathless attention to the vicar's statement ; "I am hardly able to realize so dreadful an occurrence. Ellen has never whispered a word of this to me ; and I don't wonder that she should avoid the topic, poor girl ! What a terrible blow for her, to be sure ! And you say this mystery has never been able to be cleared ?"

"Never yet, and I should fear never will, at this distance of time," answered Mr. Rose. "And yet, of course, one cannot say."

"No, of course one cannot be sure in regard to that," said Mr. Thurlow. "It is an old saying, *murder will out* ; how often has that come true ! and in what strange ways, sometimes !"

"Yes, indeed," said the vicar ; "the ways and workings of Providence are indeed marvellous and incomprehensible. It would seem, sometimes, as though God specially opened out for Himself

a way of His own, for the detecting and avenging of crime, when all human efforts have been employed ineffectually. It is undoubtedly an established principle of the Divine administration that suffering should inevitably follow in the track of evil doing. '*Be sure,*' testifies the inspired Word to us, '*your sin will find you out.*' We see this exemplified in lesser instances, almost every day of our life."

"Ah, yes," added Mr. Thurlow, "it is in vain for the transgressor to think to conceal himself. He cannot long remain undetected."

"Not always, at least," said the vicar. "He may escape at the present moment, but not at that day when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed before the assembled universe. If not detected here, *there* at least he will surely be detected, and that to his endless dismay and confusion."

"True, most true," solemnly assented the other gentleman.

Little thought Mr. Thurlow and Mr. Rose, how soon these words, to which they had given utterance, might possibly receive their verification. And still less did they think upon *whose* devoted head the lightning of discovery might be about to descend!



Mr. Makepeace and Philip Rose, however, had some idea of the *dénouement* that was not far distant !

Tremble, reader, for Mr. Burrowgrave !

The recurrence of this gentleman's name acts as a reminder to me, that the *contents* of our present chapter will be likely to belie the *heading*, unless I speedily hasten to introduce the reader to an interesting little scene, with which this ante-nuptial day concluded.

Mr. Thurlow was giving his farewell bachelor's party in dame Peekle's best room. His guests, as it might be presumed, were not numerous. They consisted but of *Doctor Gargle*, as the humble apothecary of our village, by an exaggeration of courtesy, was in general styled, of Philip Rose, and of young Mr. Ainsley, who for special purposes well known to the reader, had been invited to Sunnybrow, and who, as a friend of Philip's, was accommodated, during his short sojourn, in the vicarage.

As the entertainment was pleasantly and merrily proceeding, the door suddenly opened, and a gentleman, whose arrival had not been with certainty counted upon until the following morning, presented himself at the threshold. "MR. BURROWGRAVE !" cried Dame Peekle from the

obscurity of the passage, by way of formally announcing him ; " MR. BURROWGRAVE ! "

Mr. Thurlow hastened at once to receive and welcome his friend, and also to introduce him to the assembled company. In the course of a few minutes, Mr. Burrowgrave had taken his place at the supper table, and was duly mingling in the general flow of conversation. Although we have elsewhere described this gentleman as, for the most part, a person of somewhat stern and saturnine disposition, his deportment on this particular evening was, from some cause or other, singularly gay and animated. No doubt he was sensible that the occasion, which was of a joyous nature, demanded that he should make some little effort to adapt himself to its requirements. He talked and chatted, told anecdotes, cracked jokes, and even introduced one or two songs. So that altogether he proved an exceedingly pleasant companion, and was felt to be no slight acquisition to the little bachelor-gathering.

There was one individual of our group, however, to whom the presence of Mr. Burrowgrave, and the merry mood which he indulged, were not so entirely acceptable. The reader can easily understand that the thoughts respecting Mr. Burrowgrave which were predominant in the

mind of Philip Rose, must have tended materially to impair the pleasure with which he would otherwise have passed a festive evening in the company of that gentleman. He naturally, therefore, felt in some degree uncomfortable, and could have wished himself, perhaps, not of the party.

"Is he the man?" he seized an early opportunity of signing to his friend Ainsley, who sat on the opposite side of the table. "Is he the man?"

"Yes," nodded the other gravely in reply.

"You are quite sure?" Philip whispered softly.

"Quite," returned Mr. Ainsley.

This very positive assurance of Mr. Burrowgrave's identity with that Mr. Job Hunter, who had represented the '*Elaborate Liar*,' at the '*Little Apollo*' theatre, had the effect now of establishing, in the mind of Philip Rose, an absolute moral certainty that in the man before him he beheld the murderer of his lamented relative. The *difficulty of the hair* had been, as we know, easily disposed of by the supposition of Mr. Burrowgrave's having adopted a wig. And now, when Philip Rose stole a glance, from time to time, at that gentleman's head-dress, and remarked its particular style and cut, he entertained

no doubt whatever that a wig it was, and nothing more or less !

“ Your friend wears a wig, doesn’t he ? ” he inquired presently of Mr. Thurlow, in an undertone.

“ I’m sure I don’t know,” was the answer. “ Why do you ask ? ”

“ Oh, for nothing particular,” said Philip. “ It merely occurred to me that his hair had an artificial appearance.”

“ Well, it *has* rather, now that you call attention to it,” replied the other ; “ I shouldn’t wonder if you are right. Indeed it looks *uncommonly* like a wig.”

This was decisive. All doubt, in Philip Rose’s mind, was now at an end.

Seated by himself upon a sofa, somewhat apart from the rest of the company, he remained for several minutes silent and buried in reflection. What the subject was that he was so profoundly studying, it was impossible, of course, for any one who might have observed him at the moment, to divine. Possibly the sequel may be destined to discover to us ere very much longer !

There are occasional moments in the mental experience of, probably, most persons, when, under some specially strong excitement, or other

disordered condition of the feelings and emotions, the judgment seems suddenly to lose its balance, and its operation to become temporarily suspended, so that we are led, by an almost irresistible impulse, into courses of action against which, under ordinary circumstances, our better sense could not fail instantly and instinctively to rebel; whereby, as the not infrequent consequence, through one single unfortunate act, one single false move, so to say, is then and there irreparably lost and defeated some most desirable and important end, towards which our painstaking efforts had all along been regularly and methodically directed, and which, it may be, was all but on the very eve of a successful accomplishment.

Some such infatuation as the above would appear, at this juncture, to have seized possession of the mind of our young friend Philip Rose, rendering him incapable, for the time being, of listening to the dictates of his sober reason. Nothing short of such a supposition, at least, is sufficient to account for the very extraordinary measure, which he was presently about to adopt, to the no small amazement and consternation of Mr. Thurlow, and his other guests.

To proceed then:—It had occurred to Philip

that the *immediate* denunciation of Mr. Burrowgrave, and proclamation of his guilt, made then and there, in the face of the present company, followed straightway by the seizure of that gentleman's person, would answer the ends of justice quite as well as the more public exposure which had been arranged between Mr. Makepeace and himself, to take place on the succeeding day; indeed, that such a course would be even better, inasmuch as the extreme awkwardness and unpleasantness of having the legal proceedings against Mr. Burrowgrave associated with an occasion of marriage festivity and rejoicing, would be thereby entirely obviated. Hence, moved by the feelings of indignation and detestation, with which, supposing his inferences correct, it was very natural that he should now regard the ruthless murderer of his kinswoman, in whose vile presence he now found himself; moved, I say, by these just feelings, he resolved, after deliberating hastily, to act without delay upon the above happy inspiration.

Although the fact of Mr. Burrowgrave's head-gear consisting of a peruke was indisputable, yet it appeared to Philip that as a preliminary to the carrying out of his newly-formed design, visible ocular proof on the above point ought first to be

obtained by him. This, while it was really superfluous, would yet, he felt, be more *regular*. He considered now by what means he should provide himself with the demonstration needed. The best and most effectual mode of going to work was not long in suggesting itself.

Consequently, just at the moment when Mr. Burrowgrave was concluding, amid loud acclamations, and with a face glowing with triumph, the successful performance of a humorous piece, entitled, "*The Jackdaw of Rheims*," our young friend, stealing softly up behind, and twining his fingers tightly among the above gentleman's back-curls, now, all in an instant, with a violent jerk, forced his wrist in an upward direction, towards the ceiling!

I shall not attempt to describe, but will leave my readers to conceive the sort of *revulsion* which his whole mind must straightway have experienced,—how all his ideas must have reeled and staggered within him,—when he perceived that the wig, which should by this time have been occupying a distant corner of the apartment, had obstinately refused to part company with the head which it served to adorn! Yes, notwithstanding the force employed to dislodge it, and the shock to which it had been subjected, there

it still remained, immovable ! Philip stood all aghast in the utter bewilderment of his thoughts.

Meanwhile, Mr. Burrowgrave, smarting and howling with the bodily pain inflicted upon him, had instantly faced round upon his assailant, whom he now regarded with looks in which it would be difficult to determine whether astonishment or rage predominated.

"How now, sirrah?" he exclaimed; "how now? You impudent, daring puppy! You atrocious, infamous young whelp! What means this outrage, pray?"

Poor Philip had at length begun somewhat to realise the monstrous character of the indiscretion into which he had suffered himself to be seduced. Writhing now under the mortifying sense of his present disgraced position, visibly covered too and overwhelmed with the most abject confusion, he could as yet find no utterance for any word of deprecation or apology. He remained, for the moment, speechless.

"Fellow!" shouted Mr. Burrowgrave, in furious impatience, "don't you answer me? I demand an instant explanation of this most scandalous proceeding."

"I am most sorry, most sorry," now stammered out the other, syllable by syllable, with downcast



eyes; "I do beseech your forgiveness; I had sadly forgotten myself at the moment; I trust you will overlook it; I meant nothing; indeed I did not."


"Meant nothing, indeed!" retorted Mr. Burrowgrave, but little mollified by these humble concessions and entreaties. "Meant nothing! This is a pretty story, to be sure! Bless my life! Thurlow," he added, turning sharply and fiercely upon his host, "Thurlow, I appeal to you, sir. How comes it I am subjected to this unprovoked attack at your table? Why is this Bedlamite let loose upon me? Eh?"

"I can assure you, my dear fellow," returned Mr. Thurlow, "I am as greatly outraged as yourself, by this shameful act of violence; and, equally with yourself, am I utterly at a loss to conjecture the motives which could have led to it. I can only suppose that our friend here has taken a temporary leave of his senses! I have noticed, indeed, something very peculiar in his manner more than once during the course of this evening; and it is only a few minutes ago that he came to me in a mysterious way and questioned me rather particularly on the subject of your hair! He wanted to know whether it was natural or artificial."

"Well now, upon my word!" exclaimed Mr. Burrowgrave. "I am mightily obliged to you, young master," he added, addressing Philip, "for all this curiosity and interest, which you have so gratuitously taken upon yourself to feel in regard to me; but I will thank you to keep your hands off me, if you please. Otherwise, let me tell you, you will be likely to rue it in future."

"*Jackanapes!*" he ground between his teeth, as now, turning on his heel, he strode and stamped, in no tranquil mood, out of the room. "*Jackanapes!*"

The particulars of the inquiry which now ensued, together with the explanations, by means of which Philip Rose was able (if, indeed, he *was* able) to excuse or palliate his recent breach of the peace, and so to put himself on good terms again with all parties, and especially with Mr. Burrowgrave, it is not absolutely needful for me to detail; and I will therefore forbear doing so, as it might be somewhat taxing to my ingenuity and invention to know how to put into the mouth of our young friend any sufficient and satisfactory vindication of his conduct, which would have at once been *true*, and yet not have *tended to imperil the success of certain arrangements* which had been concerted against the following morning!



Suffice it, therefore, briefly to state that the above most untoward interruption to the festivities and harmony of the evening had speedily the effect of entirely breaking up Mr. Thurlow's little bachelor-party, and of dismissing the gentlemen who composed it (with the exception of Mr. Burrowgrave) to their several homes.

"My dear Rose," said Ainsley, as he linked his arm within that of his friend, "are you *quite* mad? What *could* have come over you, just now, that you should have acted in that insane manner?"

Philip Rose briefly explained as much as was necessary to enable the other to understand the particular object he had had in view, and the motive by which he had been influenced.

"But, my dear fellow," remonstrated Mr. Ainsley, "why should you have arrived at such a conclusion as that? What need for a wig at all? *The hair needed only to be dyed!*"

"Oh, dear," exclaimed Philip. "To think of that never having once occurred to me! Oh, dear! Oh, dear!"

CHAPTER XXV.

THE WEDDING-DAY.



HE returning light had at length ushered in the happy morning—the morning of Mr. Thurlow and Ellen's wedding-day.

Notwithstanding that the autumnal season was now far advanced—it was as late as the 2nd of November—the day was yet pre-eminently favourable. A most beautiful, lovely day indeed it was. Never were the skies a clearer blue. Never shone the sun with brighter radiance. Never was the air more balmy and delicious. Never carolled the little birds more sweetly. All nature seemed, as it were, to make an effort to attune herself into unison and sympathy with the joyous occasion, and to conspire, by a sudden revival of her fading charms, to enhance the pleasure of the bridal hour.

The little village—unused to such occasions—



it can be imagined was all enthusiasm and excitement.

One readily pictures the sage gossips clustering and thronging by every cottage door ; while the children, released with loud huzzas from school, honour the day's event by sports upon the green. Meanwhile, a band of rustic youth, with forward zeal, has put the bells in motion ; and now already, by anticipation, the grey old steeple is sending forth its melodious chimes. At last the church, adorned in simple, homely fashion for the occasion, is thrown open to the invading crowd, and is straightway filled from end to end with eager, expecting faces. All reverence the good vicar and his family, and Mr. Thurlow ; and are pressing to be admitted, and to testify their interest in the pleasing ceremony.

Alas ! that there should be anything of evil auspice, to cast a shade over this scene of universal satisfaction and delight !

Alas ! that, where all around is peace and innocence, there should yet be any dark stain of guilt and crime, to deform the fair picture !

“ And is there such ? ” I hear it low-whispered.

Oh ! reader, inquire not of *me* ! inquire of Mr. Makepeace ! inquire of Philip Rose !

* * * * *

The time was now close at hand, and all our friends had completed their final arrangements and preparations for the service. Among others who were in readiness to bear their part on this occasion, were Mr. Makepeace and Philip Rose. The former gentleman, in company with two functionaries of the law, and a very respectable-looking person in a brown suit, was quietly waiting in his little office, which lay over the way. It was thought better, all circumstances considered, that they should keep close until it became known for a certainty that they were required to act.

Meanwhile, Philip Rose had decided that the two witnesses, Richards and Mrs. Pilbreth, who had duly arrived some hours before, would be most advantageously secreted in the little belfry under the steeple, through the glass door of which a full view of the interior of the church was readily commanded. With these, then, together with Mr. Ainsley (whose testimony, however, had been sufficiently given on the previous evening, and who was merely holding himself in readiness in the event of any unforeseen difficulty calling for his further assistance)—with these, then, Philip now quietly, though with anxiously throbbing breast, awaited the arrival of the bridal



The clock was now upon the stroke of eleven, —the hour that had been appointed for the ceremony to commence—when lo! suddenly the bridegroom, amid the hearty cheers of those thronging without, and the murmured approbation of those assembled within the sacred edifice, now gaily stepped into the porch.

And right well might he be the object of admiring interest and applause to the rustic groups who pressed around him on every side. As there he stood among them—an erect, manly figure, elegantly arrayed in blue frock, and vest of yellow cashmere—his rich auburn locks all tastefully curled and parted—the purple light and flush of happiness mantling on his cheek and brow; as there with simple, unaffected dignity, he mixed among them, returning each cordial greeting, embracing each out-thrust hand, who could desire to look upon a goodlier, a nobler bridegroom?

His friend who accompanied him was dressed with more unpretending plainness, yet, at the same time, with all due and becoming taste.

As now, arm in arm, they walked up the centre aisle together, turning, from time to time, to this side and the other, while they bowed and smiled their acknowledgments, Philip Rose, summoning Mrs. Pilbreth from her place of retreat,

desired her to come up to the little glass window before referred to.

"You see him," he said, pointing to Mr. Burrowgrave, "you see him there, going along the aisle now, with the bridegroom. Is it he? Is it really your husband?"

"I think so, sir," she answered, "by his back; but they will be turning, likely, and then I can say for sure."


The pair at this moment faced round about, to look at the transept window.

"Oh, yes, sir," exclaimed Mrs. Pilbreth, with agitation and anger in her tone; "oh, yes; the bad man! There he is, as large as life! I know him again only too well. Oh, the bad—!"

"Hush, my good woman! Do not raise your voice so high. Wait quietly a little, I pray you. I have still another, and more important testimony to obtain, than yours."

So saying, he gently drew Mrs. Pilbreth back into a recess, and brought up next the old man Richards to the place of observation.

"Look, Richards," he said, "look by the pillar there. You see them talking together, don't you? Now, is that the man we want? The man *there*, I mean," he added, pointing with his finger.



"Aye, aye, sir, I see him nicely, and know him too."

"You are perfectly certain he is the very identical man?"

"Sartin, sir, as there's a God above us."

"Very well, then, Richards," said Philip Rose, "all that remains for you to do is to go quietly from the church at once to Mr. Makepeace's office over the road. You know the place. I pointed it out to you, as we came up. Tell him your name, and that you are sent by me. He is now expecting you. Say that the right man is found, and that you are ready to indicate him. He and the officers will return with you to the church immediately. You will then receive the necessary instructions from Mr. Makepeace. This is all. Go now as quickly as you can."

In the meantime, the remainder of the bridal party had entered the chancel; and all had at length begun to take their places before the altar rails. Hereupon Philip, who was required to perform on behalf of his father, who officiated, the important duty of giving away the bride, leaving Mrs. Pilbreth in the belfry, now hastened down below.

Mr. Rose, habited in surplice and stole, presently took his position at the north side of the

communion table, and began the matrimonial office. He read that solemn opening address to the congregation, which concludes, the reader will recollect, with these words: "Therefore, if any man can shew any just cause why they may not lawfully be joined together, let him now speak, or else hereafter for ever hold his peace."

He read this, and paused.


Imagine the infinite astonishment which must now have fallen on all present, when, from the extremity of the building, a clear female voice said and repeated, in a strong, firm tone: "I forbid those banns!—I forbid those banns!"

All faces, with one general movement, turned round, full of amaze, towards the quarter whence this interruption had proceeded.

"What?" exclaimed the vicar, with a somewhat disturbed manner; "what is it?"

"I forbid those banns," was the sole response. The speaker was, as you may possibly have anticipated, Mrs. Pilbreth.

Philip Rose, perceiving gradually, as he recovered from the first shock of surprise, the nature of her very awkward and most inopportune mistake, turned round towards her, and motioning with his hand, called out, present circumstances sufficiently excusing, perhaps, the slight



violation of strict order: "No, no, no, my good woman. You are entirely in error. *This* person," pointing to Mr. Burrowgrave, "is not the bridegroom. They are not *his* banns that are published. You have fallen into a grievous mistake. Pray sit down again, and allow the service to proceed. It is not *he* that is about to be married."

"*He!*" exclaimed Mrs. Pilbreth, throwing back the word; "*he! that* man! I never saw *him* in my life. It's the man in the blue coat I mean, to be sure. Do you think I don't know my own husband? Oh, Pilbreth, shame on your villany! Shame, shame!"

How shall I describe the astonishment of everybody *now*?—the universal consternation which followed the above disclosure? It were impossible.

Even Philip Rose had not expected *this*. It came upon him with a stunning, stupifying force. He remained for the moment like one semi-conscious. Presently, raising his eyes, he interrogated, with dubious glance, in turn the immediate bridal group and the congregation assembled in the rear; but there, in the mingled look of incredulity and dismay which all countenances presented, he beheld but the reflection of his own sheer bewilderment. Each one gazed blankly at

his neighbour. No word was said—save by the vicar only. Stepping out in front of the table, and looking down the entire length of the aisle, he asked, as a perceptible quiver agitated his lip and voice: “Who was that who spoke? Who is it that forbids this marriage?”

“I do, sir,” replied Mrs. Pilbreth.

“For what cause, I pray?” demanded Mr. Rose.

“Because he has another wife living already,” was the prompt rejoinder.

“Another wife already! Another wife living!” repeated the vicar, as he lifted up his hands in wonder and horror. “What? another wife?—Woman,” he then immediately added, collecting himself, “have you any sufficient grounds for this extraordinary statement, this astounding charge? Let me advise you to be careful what you here give utterance to. How came you aware of this circumstance? Who is the wife you speak of? Where is she?”

“She is *here*. I am she,” was the answer.

“I am utterly confounded,” said the vicar, as he looked round with perplexity and distress on all assembled. “Married already! Am I to believe my ears? But surely, no,” he broke off, “such a thing can never be. It is incredible—



inconceivable. The poor creature must be under the influence of some strange hallucination. Mr. Thurlow, I appeal to you at once : this accusation is false ?—utterly false, is it not ?—speak to it.”

The feelings of the unfortunate bridegroom, during the above trying scene, can, perhaps, be sufficiently imagined by the reader. I will merely say that his agitation at times was such as to place him in need of the assistance of Mr. Burrowgrave.

“ False, sir ?” exclaimed Mr. Thurlow, as he now somewhat recovered his former composure ; “ false, sir ?” he repeated with an almost indignant air ; “ need you ask ? Could any one here, for one moment, suppose it otherwise ? The poor woman is, doubtless, some crazy creature, whose sad affliction deserves our sincerest pity.” [He, here, with solemn significance, tapped his forehead with his forefinger.] “ I need scarcely add that the person is entirely unknown to me.”

“ Oh, Pilbreth !” again sounded forth the ill-omened voice from the gallery. “ Oh, Pilbreth ! Oh, you false-hearted, false-tongued villain ! To think of your daring to say such a thing as that, and to my face, too ! Where will you ever go to, you brazen-faced liar ?”

from the others, "well, certainly, this is '*confused worse confounded*,' I must say. My head feels as though a whirligig were inside of it! I have got the ghost of an opinion as to what will come out of this. The two witnesses are dead opposites to each other. Upon my word, it looks as if the whole thing was going to fall through between them."

"Are you sure," said Ainsley, "that Mrs. Pilbreth is true metal? and that she is having some little game of her own at your expense, eh?"

"Oh, I should hope it is all right there," said the answer; "it never entered my head to do her, for one moment."

"And then, again, this Richards," continued Ainsley, "he looks but an old dotard, at the best. May he not be mistaken as to Burrowgrave, at all? It will be a precious joke, Rose, if you have got yourself fixed between a knave and a fool here!"

"Why did you ask about Mrs. Pilbreth?" inquired Philip, disregarding his friend's last question; "have you any reason to be suspicious of her?"

"Well, look here," replied the other, "what do you think of this?"

So saying, he brought from his pocket a small piece of paper, folded up as a note, and addressed on the outside: "*To A. P.*" Opening it, he disclosed the following, as its contents: "Stick to him through thick, and through thin. Swear black is white, if they put you on your oath. Never fear, or flinch. I will bear you out bravely, if needed.—(Signed), J. H."

"What do you think of this?" said Ainsley. "I picked it up only a minute ago, beside the east window. That woman Pilbreth had just run round to the vestry."

"Well-to-be-sure!" gasped Philip, after he had had time to comprehend, or to think he comprehended the meaning of the billet. "Is it possible? *Job Hunter writing this to Ann Pilbreth!* Then we are all adrift and at sea from the beginning of the business to the end! Oh, dear, dear! and only fancy me having allowed myself to be cajoled and humbugged in this way! Only fancy!"

"Aye, you've made a pretty kettle of fish of it," said Ainsley, "you and old Makepeace together. What on earth could you ever be dreaming about, to go and advise with such a fool? You knew the man was a born idiot! Well, between you, you have certainly been and gone

and done it this time, haven't you? I thought the affair of the wig last night was uncommonly grand; but this morning's scene crowns everything!"

"Oh, my dear fellow," returned Philip, "say nothing more, please—or I shall go out of my mind."

* * * * *

"Don't give way so, dearest," said Mr. Thurlow, in a soothing tone, to Ellen, who sobbed convulsively, as she hung upon his arm. "Don't, don't, dearest, give way so."

"But the position," agonized the other, "is so humiliating! What *must* everybody be thinking of us? Oh, Adolphus, I feel as though I could sink into the earth for very shame!"

"Well, well, dear," rejoined Mr. Thurlow, "you will not have long now to endure this dreadful state of suspense. The woman's true character must presently reveal itself to all parties. She is evidently some raging lunatic; unless, indeed, it may be suspected that by this audacious calumny, she is thinking to serve some infamous end, best known to herself. Come, come, bear up, darling Ellen. Here, let me dry your tears for you."

And with this, he drew her tenderly towards

him, and impressed his lips gently upon her burning cheek.

It so happened that this latter action fell under the observation of Mrs. Pilbreth, who suddenly, at this moment, stepped back from the vestry door, at which she had been standing talking with Mr. Rose.

"Oh, young lady!" she exclaimed, "oh, young lady, come away, come away, I bid you, from that bad, wicked man; and thank God that I have been sent here to save you from getting into the hands of such a villain. All that he wants with you is to rob you of your money—if money you have—and then to ruin and make you miserable for your life, as he has done me before you! Oh, pity on your youth and innocence, and beauty! Oh, dear young lady, be warned by one who knows him only too well! Come away, I say, for pity's sake, come away from that monster!"

"This is intolerable!" said Mr. Thurlow. "Woman," he thundered, as his eye now fired and flashed upon her with uncontrolled anger, "woman, who are you? and how dare you come here to insult respectable persons, and to create these disgraceful disturbances? The whole place is scandalized by your presence. You shall smart for this conduct, I promise you. Be gone in-

stantly, or I will thrust you forth from the churchyard with my own hands."

"Who am I? and how dare I come here?" she retorted indignantly, and with a contemptuous sneer; and there is no saying to what virulence of abuse her harangue might not have presently proceeded, had not the sudden appearance of Mr. Makepeace and two policemen in the distance had the effect of somewhat tranquillizing the scene.

Just at this point, Philip Rose, running up in great haste, and brushing past Mrs. Pilbreth through the vestry door, placed a paper in his father's hand, and whispered eagerly to him for a few seconds.

Almost immediately afterwards, the vicar, stepping out in company with his son, addressed Mr. Thurlow as follows:—

"I have duly received this woman's declaration, and, from the wildly agitated manner, and other extravagancies of conduct with which she accompanied it, I should have judged her either to be insane, or, at least, to be labouring under some strange delusion, were it not that a very important communication, but a moment since received, strongly induces me—indeed compels me—to form a much less favourable and charitable

opinion in regard to her. From the document which I hold in my hand it is tolerably evident, I think, that she is either the author, or at least, the instrument, of some most diabolical conspiracy, of which you would appear to be the victim, but the precise nature and objects of which I am at present utterly at a loss to conjecture. Look at this."

So saying, he delivered the recently-discovered missive into the hand of Mr. Thurlow, who glanced over its contents with an expression (the reader can well believe) of no small astonishment !

"Under these circumstances, then," continued the vicar, "I can only express to all, and to you, my dear friend, in particular, my extreme regret and annoyance that so unseemly an interruption should have taken place ; as also my readiness to return with you into church and resume the service without further delay. There is still time to complete everything, before the expiration of the legal hours."

It was not, however, without further delays and interruptions (and those, too, of a yet more serious nature, perhaps, than anything which had preceded) that the ceremony of our young friends' marriage was destined to be brought to a conclusion !

"All right," replied Mr. Makepeace, with an assuring look at the speaker, while, at the same time, he glanced significantly at one of the policemen who stood alongside.

The functionary thereupon, stepping up, laid his hand quietly, but firmly, upon Mr. Burrowgrave's shoulder. "John Burrowgrave," he said, "or by whatever name you are most properly designated, you are my prisoner. I apprehend you on suspicion of having participated in a murder which took place in the neighbourhood of Littlegate, in the county of Yorkshire, on the 31st day of October, in the year 18**.

I act upon the authority and warrant of this magistrate," he explained, turning and making a respectful inclination towards the gentleman in the brown coat. He then added: "You will please now to consider yourself under arrest, and I will also thank you to accompany me quietly and without delay. It will be better (all circumstances considered) and more agreeable to the feelings of all parties that there should be no disturbance raised."

So saying, he pointed to a hackney-coach which waited on the turnpike road, at the distance of two or three hundred yards from the village.

The reader can well imagine the effect which the above startling measure must have produced



on all who were witnesses to it, and, in particular, upon Mr. Burrowgrave. That gentleman, however, was by no means disposed to yield that ready and prompt acquiescence and submission which the officer had recommended to him. "What?" he exclaimed, indignantly, as soon as his astonishment had sufficiently abated to allow him to speak, "what is the meaning of this most preposterous charge? Who, pray, is the originator of this most abominable falsehood? Stand off, and answer me directly." Any opposition, however, by which he seemed likely to delay and hinder the course of justice was speedily cut short and quelled through the prompt action of Mr. Makepeace and his satellites. On a signal from the lawyer, he was at once caught up into the sturdy arms of the two constables, and ingloriously carried forward, his thin spindle-legs and long coat tails fluttering and plunging in the air, as far as the conveyance, in the interior of which, after one or two blows with the truncheon, he was at length induced peacefully and silently to take his place!

* * * * *

"Mr. Makepeace!" exclaimed Philip Rose, in considerable excitement, after the first moment of surprise was over, "Mr. Makepeace! This

is a very summary proceeding, surely ! Are you satisfied that there are sufficiently strong presumptions against Mr. Burrowgrave, to warrant so decided action ? I really very much doubt, sir, whether your present step may not be found to have been somewhat premature ! Can you have possibly weighed and considered every circumstance, think you ?”

“Hollo, Mr. Philip,” returned the lawyer, “hollo ! What does all this long speech signify, pray ? Do you think to teach me my business, eh ? No, no, my good young sir, *your* part in this affair is played out ; and what remains to be done now, belongs to *me*. You had best, I think, calm yourself, and keep quiet. There is no need for any uneasiness whatever. Everything will be managed very judiciously. You may fully rely upon me, Mr. Philip.”

“Well, but the note ?” suggested the other. “How about the note ? Eh ?”

“I quite understand all about the note,” answered Mr. Makepeace ; “don’t let that disturb you in the least.”

* * * * *


“Oh ! my dear friend,” said the vicar with emotion, as he pressed the hand of Mr. Thurlow, “what *must* be your feelings—indeed, what must



be the feelings of each one of us—at this most trying moment, under this most staggering blow! To think that one whom you have entertained as guest, whom you have called friend, should lie under so terrible an imputation,—should be even now under legal arrest on no less a charge than that of murder! And the murder, too, *of whom*? Oh, my dear Thurlow, I cannot bear to conceive such a thought. It is altogether too shocking. But, no, no; this can never be the case; surely never! Doubtless, it is all some strange, inexplicable mistake from first to last!”

“It is impossible to do otherwise,” replied Mr. Thurlow, “than view the matter in this light. All that I have known personally of Mr. Burrowgrave or heard from others respecting him, seems entirely to forbid the supposition of his having at any time been the description of character that the present accusation would imply. For my part, I cannot but inwardly feel a strong persuasion of his innocence. At the same time, there is so much of dissimulation and hypocrisy in the world that one can really never be perfectly sure of the characters of men—no, not even of those with whom one may have been on terms of intimate acquaintance. It is sad to think this; but it is the fact, I fear. Hence, in a case such as

the present, it is perhaps wisest and best to suspend one's judgment—the expression of it, at least—until some time shall have been able fully to reveal the truth of the matter. Should it ultimately be found that my poor friend (for I may not yet deny him that title) has in any way deserved the very grave imputation at present attaching to him, then, my dear sir, with what a strangely prophetic significance—an *inspiration*, I might almost say—do those few words of ours, spoken yesterday morning in the garden, become invested! Little imagined either of us, when that familiar old proverb passed our lips—‘*Murder will out*’—how speedily its truth might be destined to become realised—aye, and that, too (more wonderfully still), in *that very instance* of the crime of homicide, relatively to which we had more immediately quoted and applied the saying! Certainly, the fact of our having conversed, as we did, on this particular topic, would be a most remarkable and striking one, should the result of investigations serve in any way to confirm the very serious and dreadful suspicion under which Mr. Burrowgrave has, for the present, unhappily fallen. But this, of course (we trust), may not be the case. I am truly glad, myself, to be able to hope better things respecting my poor friend.”



It was with a somewhat perturbed air—the natural result and expression of that uneasiness which the sense of his friend's present critical and perilous situation could not fail to create within him—that Mr. Thurlow delivered himself of the above most just and fitting sentiments; and when now, in concluding, he rested his eye for an instant on the round face of Mr. Makepeace, who stood directly in front of him, there was something in the peculiarly significant wink, with which that gentleman answered his look, that had not the effect of altogether relieving his discomposure! A slight desertion of colour, as well as some tremulousness of voice, was plainly observable, as, addressing the lawyer, he now said:—“You have done, of course, what appeared to you to be your duty. You have, I doubt not, your special reasons for making this arrest. But, surely, sir, in your own secret thoughts—in your inmost heart and soul—you can never hold Mr. Burrowgrave guilty of the horrible crime at present laid to his charge?”

Mr. Makepeace smiled somewhat strangely, by way of reply to this interrogation.

“Well, my dear friends,” at length spoke up the vicar, “to proceed again with the service at this advanced hour is plainly out of the question;

and even were there still time for the ceremony to be completed, it would scarcely, I think, after what has taken place, be congruous—or congenial to our feelings—to return into church this morning. Under the present painful circumstances, all that we can do, it would seem, is to defer the marriage, and wait as contentedly as possible until another day.”

This proposition having received (as it might well do, seeing there remained no alternative in the matter) a ready assent, the several members of our unfortunate wedding-party proceeded at once to retrace their steps in the direction of the little vicarage.

As now, with looks expressive of disappointment and chagrin, and resembling rather a funeral, train than a bridal procession, they stepped along between the rows of astonished and bewildered spectators that lined the path on either side, all on a sudden a police-constable, emerging from the crowd and confronting them, added yet another *contretemps* to the morning's disasters. Addressing himself to the bridegroom, he said: “Adolphus Thurlow, I arrest your person in the name of the Crown. You stand charged with having been concerned in the wilful murder of Fermosa Smyth!”



If a thunderbolt had suddenly descended upon our quiet little village, the universal consternation and panic could scarcely have exceeded the effect produced by these words. But I need not attempt to depict the scene now presented at once by the bridal group itself and by the surrounding crowd—how all stood aghast, petrified and fixed, in speechless wonder and dismay; how the bridegroom started and staggered and shook; how the bride, with a wail of woe, sank swooning to the earth; how, also, the loud-haranguing voice of Mrs. Pilbreth now at length became hushed in sudden silence, under the shock of this most terrible and appalling *dénouement*.

Meanwhile, the ill-starred bridegroom, after but slight resistance, had been duly secured and manacled, and was now on the point of being borne away by the officers of justice.

“Oh, Mr. Thurlow!” groaned the vicar, approaching and regarding him with horror-stricken looks. “Oh, Mr. Thurlow! Oh! Oh!”

These exclamations were all the words he could as yet find expression for in the agony of his grief and distress.

“I call Heaven to witness, I am innocent,” thickly and huskily breathed the unhappy man, whose inward agitations and writhings had the

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FROM THE DIRECTOR, FBI

TO THE DIRECTOR, FBI

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Lazarus; religion may be, and too often is, insincerely professed; but that constitutes no argument against it, but rather a testimony in favour of its reality. You may be assured that, were religion without truth and excellence and beauty, we should not meet with its counterfeits as often as we do. It would not repay men's imitation. But I must not stay to talk with you at present, Lazarus. I must hasten to my distressed family, and strive to give them some word of comfort."

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE TRIAL.

HE two prisoners were, in due course, brought up for examination before the nearest magistrates' court; and the 'appearances' against both of them were found sufficiently strong to justify their committal to York Castle, for the purpose of undergoing a trial at the winter assizes shortly to be held in that city. We pass over the intervening weeks. The hall of justice is at length thrown open, and the judge has taken his seat upon the bench; and now, I suppose, that which will here be expected from me is an impressive trial-scene! Such an *expectation*, under ordinary circumstances, would, doubtless, be very natural and very reasonable, and one would hardly find sufficient excuse for disappointing it; but in the present instance, after the somewhat sensational occurrences of the two immediately foregoing



chapters, I may well be absolved, surely, from the necessity of providing anything further, just now at least, in the shape of a '*scene* !'


With the indulgent reader's kind permission, therefore, I would propose not closely to follow the '*Littlegate murder-case*' through all its several details, but merely to give such an abridged statement of the result of the judicial proceedings, and, also, of the particular manner in which that result was arrived at, as may be absolutely needful for the purposes of my narrative.

The identity, then, of Mr. Thurlow with the man Pilbreth, in whose house the bullet-mould had been discovered, was established without difficulty. There was now no lack of respectable witnesses to give full confirmation to his poor wife's claim of affinity, which, the reader will recollect, had been, in the first instance, discredited ! That he was, also, one of the three individuals who had employed the post chaise, on the night of the murder, the coachman Richards had not the smallest hesitation in deposing.

(Richards, I may state, as well as Mrs. Pilbreth, had been at cross-purposes with Philip Rose, on the occasion of the wedding. It was Mr. Thurlow, and not Mr. Burrowgrave, that they had both had in view, and to whom their testimony referred.)

The case against Mr. Thurlow, however (notwithstanding the settlement of the above two important points), was as yet by no means clearly made out. He still needed, as much as before, to be identified with the perpetrator of the Little-gate crime! It had, indeed, always been *taken for granted* that the three young men, whom Richards had conveyed to the "*Halfway House*," were the authors of that deed of darkness; but of this there existed nothing whatever in the way of *positive proof*. No one was able to come forward and declare that he had seen the guilty act committed by any one of them.

Furthermore, the evidence against Mr. Thurlow's supposed partner in guilt was even less conclusive than that against Mr. Thurlow himself. The circumstance of the secret letter having been seen in Mr. Burrowgrave's possession was (plainly) only sufficient (notwithstanding the nature of the contents of that letter) to give rise to a certain degree of suspicion; and although Philip Rose was *morally persuaded* that the features, of which he had obtained a glimpse on that fatal night, were those of Burrowgrave, yet, at the same time, he scarcely felt himself prepared to make *upon oath* a declaration to that effect.



So that, on the whole (the one mainly important link in the chain of evidence remaining unsupplied), there seemed every likelihood that the prosecution would ultimately fail, and both prisoners obtain their acquittal.

Mr. Makepeace, however, had from the first perceived wherein lay the difficulty which was most calculated to hinder the success of his case, and had taken care, moreover, not to be unprovided against it. He had early come to the conclusion that all chance of any conviction must depend on his obtaining the evidence of one or other of the accused parties against his companion.

Consequently, some little time previously to the commencement of the trial, he resorted to Mr. Burrowgrave (whose guilt he judged to have been that of an accessory only), and, after representing to him the extreme folly of jeopardizing his own life in the vain hope of being able to preserve that of his friend, he then strongly urged the expediency of his at once coming forward on behalf of the Crown against the actual murderer. It was in this way only (he hinted to him), viz., by becoming "*King's evidence*," that he could possibly save his own neck ! Mr. Burrowgrave had a wholesome dread and horror of the "*knot of noose*," which "*to special friend the*

hangman does dispose," and his fears were easily worked upon by these gloomy insinuations of the astute and somewhat unscrupulous lawyer. And there was also, perhaps, another consideration (which I would leave the intelligent reader to guess at) that might now render him less disposed than formerly to serve Mr. Thurlow to his own risk and prejudice. So that, one way and another, it was with but small reluctance that he acceded presently to the proposal and recommendation that Mr. Makepeace had made to him. His evidence in court may be briefly summed up as follows:—

“In company with, and at the instigation of, one Logan, an Irishman, he and the prisoner Thurlow had, on the night of the 31st of October, in the year 18**, resorted to a place in the neighbourhood of Littlegate, commonly called the ‘*Halfway House*,’ for the purpose of robbing the Reverend John Gauntlett of a large sum of money which he was known to be carrying on that occasion. The pressure of pecuniary embarrassments alone had prompted the commission of this criminal act. No further violence against Mr. Gauntlett or his party had been intended beyond such as might prove necessary to secure the object aforementioned. Least of all had the

possibility of bloodshed been contemplated. The discharge of the pistol, on the part of the man Logan, was the result of some sudden impulse of the moment, for which he (the witness) was not able to account. The weapon was in reality the property of Thurlow, who was in the habit of carrying loaded fire-arms, though rather for the purposes of amusement and sport than with any unlawful and deadly intent. His companions (he might say) had been drinking together during the day, and were both somewhat under the influence of liquor at the time. His own share in this transaction had consisted, firstly, in stopping and securing the carriage; next, in assisting to disable and prostrate the Reverend Mr. Gauntlett; lastly, in rifling that gentleman's person, and in dividing the spoil with his companions," etc.

Mr. Burrowgrave's testimony (of which the above were the principal items) having been given to the court, the trial was now adjourned, until the apprehension of the other prisoner (for which a warrant was forthwith issued) had time to be effected.


Through aid of information supplied by his former companion and accomplice, Logan was found and captured without difficulty; and, on

the next day but one following, the Littlegate murder case was once more proceeded with. After the several witnesses had been re-examined, and the learned counsel both for the prosecution and defence had duly spoken upon the case, it only further remained that the evidence should be reviewed and summed up by Mr. Justice Hopewell.

There were one or two points, in particular, which his lordship, in delivering his charge to the gentlemen of the jury, would desire to press on their careful consideration :

1. In the first place, the *extreme youth* of the prisoner Thurlow (he was under the age of twenty at the period when his crime had been committed) might serve as a certain plea for the exercise of lenity towards him. It might well be believed that the lad had shared in this criminal enterprise more in the spirit of a drunken frolic than with any premeditated felonious purpose.

2. Secondly, in whatever light the employment of the pistol might naturally claim to be regarded, it must yet be remembered that the existence of a murderous design *had not been proved*. Might not the shot, that had taken such fatal effect, have been fired for purposes of intimidation merely? There was room, he ventured to submit, for trusting so. Indeed, all circumstances



considered, this would appear to commend itself, not only as the most charitable, but also as the most probable, view of the matter.

3. Lastly, the ascertained bad character of the two men, during *subsequent* years and up to the present moment, must not be allowed unduly to influence their decision in this particular case. It would be sufficient and fair for them to return such a verdict *now*, as they would have seen their way to return *then*, had the detection and trial of the offenders been immediately consequent on the perpetration of the offence.

The jury now retired to their private room, and consulted together for a space. They were not very long in arriving at a unanimous opinion on the case before them. Returning presently into court, they again took their places, as before, in the jury-box.

"Gentlemen of the jury," demanded Mr. Justice Hopewell, "are you agreed upon your verdict?"

"Yes, my lord," replied the foreman.

"How say you then?" continued the judge; "guilty or not guilty?"

"We find the prisoner Logan, my lord, *guilty of manslaughter*," was the answer; "and with regard to the other, although we cannot but hold him as having aided and abetted in an act of

robbery accompanied with violence, yet, having in view certain circumstances which may perhaps be admitted as extenuations of his guilt, we would pray your lordship, in passing sentence, to deal with him as favourably as you may think consistent with the interests of justice."

The judge hereupon, in appropriate and solemn language, addressed the prisoners at some length; after which, he finally concluded by sentencing the homicide Logan to be transported beyond the seas for a protracted term of years; while he inflicted upon his less guilty companion such imprisonment as might be sufficient to satisfy the demands of public justice.

The unhappy Mr. Thurlow, during the course of the above proceedings, had exhibited but little outward indication of anything that might be passing within his mind. At one stage only, viz., when Mr. Burrowgrave appeared in the witness-box for the purpose of bearing testimony against him—it was only then that he seemed (momentarily) to betray his sentiments. He had evidently not been prepared for this *desertion* on the part of his recent friend, and he made but an ill attempt to conceal the feelings of dismay with which he regarded it. But otherwise, saving in this single instance, he was successful in main-

taining throughout that entirely *negative* expression of countenance from which little or nothing can be well inferred, and which, in the case of an accused person, is equally compatible with the supposition of guilt or innocence !

It was with a calmness, almost amounting to indifference, that he silently received the learned judge's address ; and it was only when the proceedings had finally terminated, and he was now being conveyed back into his cell, that he once more murmured a repetition of those solemn and awful adjurations with which he had from the first protested his innocence of the crime laid to his charge !

CHAPTER XXVII.

IN WHICH IS DECLARED WHAT THEY THOUGHT OF IT
ALL AT SUNNYBROW VICARAGE.



THE issue of this most important case had been awaited with no ordinary feelings of interest and anxiety by our poor friends at Sunnybrow vicarage.

The reader can well imagine the conflict of hopes and fears, that could not fail, painfully and unceasingly, to agitate the breast of each one of them during the somewhat protracted interval of suspense.

And in what a dilemma, too, must each one have felt himself involved, when he came to put the question to himself: "*What* should he fear or hope?"

Did it not seem as though his best hopes, in one regard, could only be fulfilled by the realisation of his worst fears in another? Was it possible to withstand the conclusion, that of two equally untoward results, the one or the other



must inevitably befall?—either that a guilty individual should evade detection and punishment, or that *one* should be revealed as guilty, whom, even for a single moment, otherwise to conceive of than as an innocent person was an infinitely dreadful and distressing thought? That the authors of the Littlegate tragedy should be dragged to justice was indeed, above all things, devoutly to be wished; but that in Mr. Thurlow, one of these should be capable of being recognised, this was no less devoutly to be deprecated. Indeed, the mere supposition of such a thing was one from which the mind could not but instantly recoil. It was an idea altogether too horrible to be even momentarily entertained.

With such views, then, and sentiments, or, as I should rather perhaps describe it, in such an uncomfortable state of perplexed doubt, did our little family eagerly await the result of the trial at York Assizes.

And when now, at length, that result was announced to them, what may be supposed were the emotions with which the announcement was received, and the shock which it occasioned? Incredulity, utter incredulity, was at first the predominant feeling in the mind of all! ‘Against Mr. Thurlow, it were impossible to

believe this ! The charge must be false, surely, —some monstrous calumny which it behoved every one at once to reject and resent with indignation ! No, no, such a thing could never be ! Never, never ! Who could bring himself to imagine of that dearly-beloved and cherished friend, who had been so long the vicar's confidant and '*right-hand man*,' who had been Philip Rose's chosen, constant companion, who was Ellen's affianced husband,—who could, for one instant, imagine of *him* as a criminal and as a felon ?

Such was the fact, however, the sturdy, obstinate fact ; one, too, which (slow and reluctant as they all were to it) they had yet no alternative but presently to accept and learn to realise in all its unpleasing ugliness.

And *then*, when their eyes had at length become open to the whole of the hideous truth, what a storm of thoughts did there arise ! What a tornado of bitterly-galling, mortifying, harrowing reflections did there *then* sweep through and through the breast of each of those three ill-starred victims of a grand imposture !

Poor Mr. Rose ! What must have been his inward moanings and (I may almost add) self-reproachings ! 'How could he ever have suf-

ferred himself to be so egregiously and (as it had well-nigh proved) so fatally deluded? To think that the man to whom he had extended the right-hand of friendship, whom he had welcomed into his domestic circle, with whom he had shared all his confidences, and whom he had admitted into all his counsels,—whose services he had employed in his parish and in connexion with his church,—with whom he had held (as he imagined) Christian intercourse and communion,—whom he had positively encouraged to aspire unto the sacred office and functions of the ministry, to whose society it had been a gratification and pleasure to him to find his son resorting,—yea, to whom, with undoubting confidence, he had even entrusted the well-being and happiness of his youthful ward and cousin,—to think that this man had been, all the while, but a hollow hypocrite and a designing rogue, nay, still more than this, a licentious profligate and a deep-dyed villain, a wife-deserter indeed, a bigamist,—the latter at least in intention, as the former in actual fact! To think of all this!’ The thought indeed was almost more than the poor vicar found himself able to sustain.

Alas, too, for Ellen Smyth! And I may well say ‘alas’ for *her*! It was on no other individual than an associate of the ruthless destroyer

of her dear mother's life that she had been on the point of bestowing her hand and fortune, as she had even already conferred on him her heart's truest affections! No words can possibly avail to declare the depths of unutterable woe and anguish into which this horrifying reflection must have had the effect of now plunging her cruelly-wounded and well-nigh broken spirit! To Ellen we can only accord our *silent* sympathy and compassion.

"And *this*, forsooth," (exclaimed Philip derisively, in the bitterness of his soul) "*this* is the fine suitor, who was preferred to me! It was for this heartless reprobate, this crime-stained ruffian, that Ellen has been so carefully preserved all these many years! It was that her money should fall into *his* plundering hands, that she has been so jealously guarded from the approaches of one who would have loved her *for herself and for herself alone!* This is her guardian's protection of her, and his provision for her! This is the end and upshot of all my father's conscientious scruples and high sense of responsibility, and of all those eloquent discourses about honour and propriety and justice! A pretty finale, certainly!"

* * * * *

"Well, my dear children," said Mr. Rose, as

the family sat together in the evening, "in the midst of all our grief and vexation, we are yet not left without *something* that may serve to soothe and console us. It is at least satisfactory to feel that the case is not so bad but that it might have been even worse; and oh! how much worse, how infinitely worse! What if the marriage ceremony had been completed? Think of that! If we are chargeable with indiscretion in having thus, without inquiry, admitted a stranger into our society and confidence, we have reason to be thankful that we are spared, at any rate, (though by but a narrow escape) the worst and most serious consequences of our error. When we contrast what *is* with what *might have been*, and indeed *so nearly was*, we have much cause, I think, to take comfort under this sad blow to us all alike. We must not forget also, that, unfortunate and calamitous as may have been this attachment of yours, Ellen, to Mr. Thurlow, yet, but for it, a great and important end of justice (one, too, in regard to which none of us could well be supposed to be indifferent) had, in all human probability, never been served! This consideration should have the effect of reconciling us, in some degree at least, to that which has befallen. Indeed, my dear children, when one thoughtfully reviews all cir-

cumstances, it would seem scarcely possible to believe otherwise (painful as many of those circumstances have been to all of us) than that they have in reality been caused to combine together only for our best and truest advantage. In the various occurrences of the past few months, we may trace, surely, the hand of the Almighty Disposer of all things working out, by strange, wondrous ways and means, the accomplishment of Heaven's own righteous purpose. Can we doubt that the coming of that unhappy man to this place, and his introduction into this family, had been specially ordered and directed, not indeed (as he himself might contemplate) that the innocent and virtuous should be permitted to suffer through his artifices, but that that Divine retribution might at length light upon his own guilty head, to which his vices and crimes had long rendered him obnoxious?

"Looking at the whole, then, my dear Ellen and Philip, our feelings, I think, should be not so much those of disappointment and mortification, as rather those of thankfulness and gratitude to that wise and merciful Providence which, out of much apparent ill, has evolved as much, if not more, real good; good that we can already see in part, *and good, it may be, that it remains for us yet to witness!*"

CHAPTER XXVIII.

EXPLANATIONS.



THE duly attentive and reflective reader cannot but entertain, by this time, a tolerably certain conviction of Mr. Thurlow's identity with our friend Job Hunter, as also a pretty shrewd suspicion that the names Burrowgrave and Daws apply to but one and the same individual. In either case his conjecture (I may say) has been a perfectly true one.

There are, however, some few seeming discrepancies and contradictions between the several facts recorded or statements reported, during the course of the foregoing narrative, which may have tended, probably, to perplex his calculations, and so to retard somewhat his progress towards the above conclusion. These it will be the purpose of the present chapter to reconcile and remove by a word of explanation.

Before entering upon this task, I would beg leave to offer one brief remark and suggestion : Should there be any one whose own astuteness and penetration have sufficed to put him in possession of the key to all mysteries, and to supply him with the right solution of all points of difficulty, (or who at least feels satisfied that such is the case), then let him by all means pass over this chapter and begin the next. My 'explanations' are altogether unnecessary and superfluous in his case ; and I should be strongly averse to trespass unreasonably upon his kind attention and patience ! It is with the more willingness that I here offer this licence to the somewhat prevalent and favourite practice of '*skipping*' (a practice which the *somewhat tedious length* of most modern novels renders fully excusable), as I believe that, with the exception of the present one, there is no other chapter of those so far written which it is possible to omit without either losing the connexion or impairing the interest of the tale.

But now to proceed :

1. The first difficulty that I would propose to explain consists in the identity (as was supposed) of Mr. Burrowgrave with that Mr. Job Hunter, who represented the '*Elaborate Liar*'

at the '*Little Apollo*' theatre. According to the testimony of young Ainsley, the two men corresponded together so exactly, that there could be no question as to their being, in reality, one and the same person ! But, if (as we have now admitted) Mr. Thurlow also is identical with Job Hunter, how can this possibly be ?

The truth is that the person, who represented the '*Elaborate Liar*,' was not, in reality, Mr. Job Hunter at all, but some one else (call him Daws, Burrowgrave, or what you will) acting in his stead, and passing under his name. The substitution was brought about in the following way :—Mr. Thurlow (it will be recollected) dined and spent an afternoon with Philip Rose on one occasion. As they were sitting over their wine together, Philip's neighbour, Andrewes, (it will also be remembered) entered suddenly and exhibited a placard, announcing Mr. Job Hunter, in the character of the '*Elaborate Liar*,' for that same evening. He also intimated his intention of going to the '*Little Apollo*' and witnessing the performance.

It was immediately evident to Mr. Job Hunter (or Thurlow) that the business which had specially brought him into town on that day could not now be accomplished without considerable

risk, if not absolute certainty, of his being discovered by the good people of Sunnybrow vicarage, under his true colours, and in his true character. And this would sadly militate against the success of that elaborate system of falsehood and deceit, by means of which he had for so long been prosecuting his infamous designs on the purse of a certain young lady of our acquaintance !

Consequently, he lost no time in seeing his patron and employer, and explaining to him that it was impossible, under existing circumstances, that he should fulfil his engagement. The result was that Mr. Daws, driven to extremity, was fain to take the '*part*' himself, and do his best with it.

2. The cryptograph, found in the possession of Mr. Burrowgrave, had had the effect, with Philip Rose, of identifying the above-named gentleman with Job Hunter. The inference was a natural one enough, perhaps, at first sight. Our young friend, however, should have seen, on subsequent reflection, that the secret letter might as easily have been penned by Mr. Burrowgrave, as addressed to that individual !

This was indeed the actual case, and contained the solution of whatever might have appeared mysterious and perplexing.

It will be borne in mind that when Mr. Thurlow, on one occasion, remonstrated with his friend for having come out to Sunnybrow, without previously announcing his intention of doing so, Mr. Burrowgrave included the following words in the reply which he thereupon made :—

“ Well, the fact is, I *did* sit down to write to you first ; but afterwards, on consideration, I thought better of it, and came off at once.”

The letter here alluded to—written, but not despatched—was that which fell out of the pocket of Mr. Burrowgrave, and into the hands of Philip Rose !

3. The small note discovered by Mr. Ainsley on the walk outside the church, and presumed to have been dropped, in her haste, by Mrs. Pilbreth, has not, I trust, occasioned undue perplexity to the mind of any of my readers. At any rate, it shall not be permitted longer to do so.

This then, was merely an ingenious device of Mr. Burrowgrave, for the purpose of protecting his friend from exposure, by impeaching the honesty, and by casting doubt and discredit on the assertions of the poor woman who claimed, only too justly, to be his wife !

Whether the adoption of the initials “ J. H.” in the signature was merely accidental and the

result of chance, or whether it is to be regarded as implying, on the part of Mr. Burrowgrave, any inkling and suspicion as to the *more serious* catastrophe that was impending, I must, for want of *certain* information on this particular point, leave undecided.

That which Mr. Burrowgrave, at one stage of the proceedings, was observed to receive, under cover of a handkerchief, from the hand of the bridegroom, consisted, as the reader will now probably be able to anticipate, of the needful articles and materials for the production of the small billet above mentioned.

The fact that the discovery of this note failed to make the same impression upon the mind of the lawyer as it had done on that of the clergyman, was simply owing to the circumstance that Mr. Burrowgrave—when he deposited the said note upon the path, and then immediately afterwards proceeded to hail the youth Ainsley from such a point of the graveyard as that, in hastening in answer to his summons, he must necessarily pass close to, and perceive the paper, and in all likelihood, take it up—had, unfortunately for the success of his very neat little stratagem, been watched by Mr. Makepeace through one of the chancel windows !

The document, with which Mr. Makepeace and his friend in the brown suit so carefully compared Mr. Burrowgrave's note, was none other than the cryptograph letter, which had all along been involved in so great mystery, and had given rise to so much doubtful speculation. The object of the comparison—or the *result* of it, at any rate—was to settle and fix the authorship upon Mr. Burrowgrave.

I have now, I think, sufficiently elucidated those points which more particularly demanded elucidation. As to any other problems and difficulties of minor importance, I may safely entrust their solution to the intelligence and sagacity of the reader, who will, doubtless, have but small difficulty in discerning *the* reason, or in inventing a reason, in each instance!

I only intimate, further, that the individual *unknown*, who furnished occasion for the display of Mr. Thurlow's heroism in our twelfth, and of Mr. Burrowgrave's liberality in our twenty-second chapter, has been more than once designated *by name* in the course of the story!

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE PRISONER IS VISITED IN HIS CELL.



NATURAL as it would, undoubtedly, have been for Mr. Rose to regard with no other emotions than those of the deepest indignation and resentment the conduct of the wretch who had so heartlessly designed and attempted to blight the happiness of his family, it nevertheless, was the feeling of the good vicar of Sunnybrow that he should scarcely wish (considering the connection that had subsisted between himself and Mr. Thurlow) to sever finally his acquaintance with the unhappy man, without bidding him such farewell as might be suitable to the circumstances of his present situation. A parting word of this nature might or might not be well received by him to whom it was addressed—might or might not be attended with good. But, in any case, it could be attended with no harm ; and there was at least *one* end, if

no other, which it could not fail (thought Mr. Rose) to serve: it would be the best and most convincing proof he could furnish to the offender that, if he had his disapprobation, he had also his forgiveness. Influenced by these considerations, Mr. Rose determined, accordingly, to go without delay to York and gain an interview with Mr. Thurlow, who still remained under confinement in that place.

On presenting himself at the gaol, and signifying his name and the object of his visit, he was at once admitted, and, in the course of a few minutes, introduced into the cell of the prisoner.

On his entrance, the poor man (who had been sitting gazing, with pensive and disconsolate air, through the small iron-grating which served at once for the ventilation and the illumination of his damp and gloomy tenement) exhibited that degree of astonishment and confusion which it was only natural to expect that he should manifest.

"Well," said Mr. Rose, who could not but perceive the involuntary start and heightened colour which his sudden presence had occasioned, "well, Mr. Thurlow, you are surprised at receiving a visit from me,—but not displeased, I trust."

The other made no acknowledgment either by

word or look. He only averted his head in silence.

"It is as your *friend* that I have come hither, *solely* as your friend," continued the vicar. "It is in *that* light that I should wish you to regard me."

Mr. Thurlow made no reply.

"Will you not speak to me?" mildly asked the reverend gentleman. "Perhaps my visit is unwelcome to you? Is it so?"

The other still maintained a silent reserve.

"Well," said Mr. Rose at length, "your indisposition to speak is intelligible to me. It is very natural, under the circumstances, that you should feel it. I will not press you, therefore. You would be willing, perhaps, to hear me, if I should say a few words to you? Let me sit down here on the bench beside you."

The worthy vicar now proceeded, with much gentleness and kindness of manner, to address to the unhappy criminal such words as seemed most suited to his case. He rebuked, of course, though without severity, his vices and misdoings, urging him to the consideration of their enormity, not in man's view alone, but in the eyes of Heaven. He ventured to trust that the lesson he was now learning in the school of adversity and suffering

might not be learned in vain ; that the present timely check to his evil courses might serve to withdraw and deter him from their indulgence in future ; that the retribution which had already overtaken him in this world might have the effect of preserving him from the graver consequence of his errors in the world to come ; that this present season of solitude might be improved for the purposes of reflection and self-examination—occupied by thoughts of penitence and resolutions of amendment.

On these and other points he dwelt in appropriate terms, and pleaded with earnest, beseeching eloquence. And when now, in concluding, he took and warmly, tenderly pressed the hand of the poor delinquent, then at length could that miserable man no longer refrain himself or withstand the battery of love and kindness that had been brought to bear against his obdurate and unrelenting heart.

“ Oh, sir,” he exclaimed, his voice and whole frame quivering with emotion, “ oh, sir, this is indeed more than I can bear ! How could I have ever looked for this ? or been able to imagine it ? That *you*,—whom I have so basely treated, whom I have so egregiously wronged,—that *you*, of all mankind, should con-

descend to feel an interest in my welfare and to pity me in my degradation and misery!—Oh, sir, the thought of such surpassing goodness as this is sharper anguish to me than all the pangs and tortures of remorse my mind has yet endured!

“Ah, Mr. Rose”, he added, after struggling with his feelings for some moments, “ah, Mr. Rose,” he groaned, in bitter self-reproach, “too long have I deceived you! But I will deceive you no longer now! I am, indeed, the vile wretch, the black-hearted villain you have supposed me! I am all, and worse, than you have thought! Let me, at least, make this confession. It is the only amends to you in my power.”

And now, plied and pressed by the vicar’s interrogations, the poor, unhappy man, with infinite shame and confusion of face, made by slow degrees a full and unreserved disclosure of the manifold errors of his past life, not omitting the several details of that more recent scheme of extreme villainy, with which his residence in the village of Sunnybrow had been connected.

“Ah! it is very, very sad,” responded Mr. Rose, when he had concluded—“But” (he added, in his desire to extenuate, if possible, the offender’s guilt and to spare his feelings)

"you were ignorant, no doubt, of the relationship between Miss Smyth and the family against which you had so sadly transgressed? You had little idea that it was into Mr. Gauntlett's family of Littlegate that you had introduced yourself? Of course not. Owing to the change in our surname, you would not know who we really were. Otherwise, you could hardly have ventured on so daring and dangerous a step. Indeed, even your own feelings must have revolted against so heartless and horrible an outrage upon every natural instinct and affection."

"Sir," replied the other, the tears now streaming down his face, and his voice almost choking in his throat, "I will not deceive you. *I cannot, cannot*, deceive one from whom I have received so magnanimous and generous treatment. And indeed, to do this, would be of little avail or service to me; as you could not (for anything I might further plead guilty to) well think worse of me than you must needs do already. Alas! then, sir (with shame and grief I make the confession), *I knew it all only too well!*—Not, indeed, previously to my coming to Sunnybrow, but (and this is the *damning* fact) previously to my matrimonial engagement! I learned the circumstance from a private conversation (which

I was in a position to overhear) between yourself and Miss Smyth, one evening, in the drawing-room !”

“I think none the worse of you for your *candour*, at any rate,” said Mr. Rose, “but all the better. But now, my poor friend—for, as such I would even still acknowledge you, despite your errors, so they be but repented of—the moments at my command have now expired ; and our interview must cease. It has been a painful one, indeed, but by no means an unsatisfactory one. On many accounts I am truly glad that it has taken place. I leave you now, Thurlow, it may be, for ever. But whether I am destined to meet with you again or not, you will retain a place in my thoughts, and not be forgotten in my prayers. May God forgive your crimes, as I have already done your injustice towards myself ! Farewell !”

CHAPTER XXX.

IN WHICH THE STORY CONCLUDES SATISFACTORILY.



SOME weeks had now rolled away since the *grand catastrophe* of our tale ; and people had had time to recover themselves ; as it were, *to breathe again*, after the shock which had been occasioned to their minds and feelings.

The sharp pang of distress which must needs have thrilled the breast of each one, as he witnessed the terrible discomfiture and downfall of poor Mr. Thurlow, had now in a great measure become lulled and soothed.

The tempest of mingled and conflicting emotions that had thereupon burst forth, had at length subsided from its violence, and was hushed into stillness.

Life, in short, in our quiet little village and vicarage, was once more flowing easily onward in its usual placid and tranquil course.

One morning, about this period, Philip Rose arrived unexpectedly from town, and, resorting to the library, held there a somewhat lengthened interview with his father. Inasmuch as the subject of their conversation was one in which my readers may probably feel some degree of interest, I will take the liberty of presenting them here with a brief extract :—

“ Well, father,” said Philip, “ you have heard now all that I had to state and propose. It only remains for you to say what you think about it. Is it going, now, to be approval? or are you meditating objections? Come, father, what is it to be? Let me hear your answer.”

“ Your communication, Phil,” said Mr. Rose, “ has by no means taken me by surprise. It is only what I had been fully prepared for. Indeed it would have been strange had the case been otherwise, after all that has already passed between us on this interesting subject. Well, Phil, the step you contemplate is unquestionably a serious one, and a step to which a young man should not commit himself without very careful consideration. You have, however, I am aware, had this matter under consideration to some extent, and that not recently only. Therefore, if you feel that your mind is really made up on the

point, why then, not to detain you in suspense, I may say at once that I see nothing which could now justify me in discountenancing or opposing your views and wishes in regard to Ellen. There was a time, certainly, when I felt constrained to dissuade you from indulging sentiments of this sort towards your cousin; but circumstances since then have undergone a material change. The case now is very different, both as respects yourself and her."

"People could scarcely find any ground now, I think," said Philip, "to cavil and talk."

"I was referring partly to that, of course, though not entirely," returned Mr. Rose. "Yes, the world is always free with its opinions and criticisms, and to a certain extent it is expedient, and indeed requisite, to regard these. At the same time, there is a certain point, beyond which such deference is no longer obligatory, and we are at liberty to exercise our own judgment, and to consult our own inclinations. People will talk as they like, and there will ever be found those who are ready to say evil things; yet if we have the '*mens conscia recti*,' we can often afford '*ridere mendacia famæ*.' Yes, my dear Phil, you have my ready permission to solicit the hand of your cousin, Ellen Smyth; and most heartily do I wish your suit every success."

Philip Rose thought it best to lose as little time as possible in making known the state of his heart and affections to the young lady, whom he had determined (provided she herself proved willing) to make his wife. And, as it so chanced, he had not very long to wait before a favourable opportunity presented itself of introducing the somewhat delicate and difficult topic. On entering the drawing-room, and advancing to greet his fair cousin, whom he had not as yet seen since his arrival, he observed, somewhat to his surprise, that she was *in tears*!

"Oh, Ellen, Ellen!" he exclaimed, "I'm sorry to find you like this. What's the matter? Has anything happened?"

"Oh, it's nothing, Phil, nothing at all," was the answer. "But I had no idea you were here. What's brought you down this morning?"

"Nay, Ellen, but it must be something, or *this* could never be! Come, what is it? Tell me." So persisted Philip, ignoring his cousin's inquiry.

"Oh, nothing, nothing, I tell you," answered Ellen, a little impatiently—"nothing you need concern yourself about. Don't be so curious, I'phil."

"Well, Ellen," said the other, "I think I know what it all means. You've been brooding

over this sad affair again, haven't you? Well, it's very natural, and I don't wonder that you should continue to feel it."

"Well, well, Phil, yes; you are quite right; I *have* been doing so. And I shouldn't have been so brief and cross with *you*, dear Phil, to whom I am so much indebted in regard to this very matter. I shouldn't indeed. But I am sorry, and you will forgive me."

"Indebted to *me*, Ellen, do you say?" exclaimed the other. "I was not aware of it. How so?"

"*How so?*" returned his cousin. "Why, my dear Phil, I owe everything to you. Think what would have become of me, what I should have been at this moment, but for your sagacity and cleverness in finding out the truth with respect to that wretched, dreadful man!"

"It was, certainly, very fortunate for you that I was led upon his track, and enabled to overtake and run him down in his real character; but after all, this was as much good luck as good management on my part. I scarcely think that any service I may have been in a position to render, need lay you under very serious obligations to me."

"Oh, my dear Phil," protested Ellen, "don't

say so. Explain things as you may, I must needs ever look upon you, and feel towards you, as my deliverer from infinite misery and ruin—from a fate, the mere thought of which is enough to chill and freeze the blood within my veins ! How can I ever be sufficiently grateful, or adequately express my sense and appreciation of the unspeakable service you have done me ?”

“ Well, Ellen,” rejoined Philip, “ if you *will* insist upon making me your creditor in this instance, I believe it would not be very difficult to point out a way in which you may discharge the debt you feel sensible of, and satisfy any claims I may have to make upon your gratitude !”

“ Eh, Phil ? What ? How can I possibly do this ? I have no idea what you are referring to.”

And yet there was *that* in the expression of her countenance which seemed, in spite of this modest denial, to argue some little penetration and perception of her cousin’s meaning !

“ Well, Ellen, am I to tell you ? In this way, then, to be sure : by allowing me to take possession of the prize I have been so fortunate as to rescue from the spoiler ; by transferring to me, if you can, those precious affections which you had so miserably wasted and squandered upon one who never was worthy of them.”

"Oh, Phil," exclaimed Ellen faintly, and with faltering tongue, as her drooping face paled slightly for the moment, and then, in the next instant, became suffused with a crimson flush. "Oh, Phil!"

"May I hope for this, Ellen? Am I worthy of so high a boon?" And he gently took and pressed the not-unwilling hand.

"Is it, then, really so, Phil? Can you seriously mean such a thing? Have you rightly considered of it?"

So said Ellen, not well knowing, perhaps, what she said, or what she wished to say.

"Ah, Ellen! Would that I had only felt myself free to speak this to you when *first* I considered of it—when *first* I meant it, years and years ago! Oh, how I always longed to speak these words! But, alas! it might not be."

"And oh!" cried the girl, with a passionate earnestness and vehemence, which would not be repressed, "oh! had you but spoken, how gladly should I have heard! what joy had been mine!"

No more was said. No more needed to be said. Philip drew her towards him—clasped her to his breast. And now, these two virtuous, pure-hearted ones, who had been born to love each other—who already, in time gone by, had

secretly loved—yea, had been loved, too, in return, though this they knew not—at length sweetly pledged their faith together, and sealed the sacred covenant with their lips !

It is enough. Let us draw a curtain before the tender scene. Let them bask in the sunlight of each other's love ungazed at and undisturbed.

* * * * *

The weeks, then, rolled swiftly onwards ; and now a second time (but, oh ! under how different auspices !) there dawned a bridal day upon our little village. Once more the vicar stands by the altar. Once more the service is begun, and (on *this* occasion) is also finished. Once more the old church-steeple rings out its congratulatory peal ; and at last Philip and Ellen walk forth man and wife ! Hail, all hail, to the youthful pair ! May length of days and happiness be their portion !

“ Well, my dears,” said the good vicar, as he took leave of them, previously to their departure on their wedding-trip, “ well, my dear Philip and Ellen, this is indeed a moment of pleasure to all of us ; to me, you may feel assured, no less than to yourselves. In regard to both of you, a long-cherished hope and fervent desire of my heart has now at last been fulfilled. Circumstances

have indeed more than once arisen that seemed to forbid me in any such anticipation ; but even when they appeared most contrary, I did not even then allow myself entirely to lose hope that (through some turn of events or another) I might yet live to see this day. And I *have* seen it ! Well, I am indeed truly thankful, more thankful than I am able to express. You are then, Philip and Ellen, united together as husband and wife ! What word of gratulation and well-wishing have I now to give you on this happy occasion of your marriage ? Long may you live, my dear children, to tread together the paths of innocence and virtue and piety ! Long may you continue to enjoy each other's affection, to partake each other's hopes and interests and pleasures—to counsel and guide each other in all times of difficulty and perplexity, and, if need be, to solace and support each other in the dark hour of sorrow and affliction ! Above all—betide what may, come joy or grief, weal or woe—still may the course of your journey through life be such as to bring you ever nearer—each day and hour nearer—to the blessed mansions of your Heavenly Father's house ! On both of you, my darlings, I invoke Heaven's richest blessings both here and hereafter !”

With that the good old clergyman affectionately and tenderly embraced them both. He then, with swelling heart and tear-moistened eye, accompanied them to their carriage.

POSTSCRIPT.

It may be satisfactory to my readers to learn the end, as they already know the beginning, of Mr. Job Hunter's career.

Let me state, then, in a brief postscript, that the bitter and painful lesson, which the detection and punishment of his villanies had served to teach him, was not destined speedily to be forgotten. In particular, the unparalleled generosity and benevolence of one whom he had so grievously offended against and injured, did not fail duly to move him and to exercise their salutary influence upon his character.

After duly undergoing the punishment which his misdeeds had entailed upon him, he at length

returned to liberty, an altered and (to all appearance) entirely different individual. And although he never perhaps again attained to that high religious standard and reputation for piety to which he had in former years pretended, in the name and under the character of Mr. Thurlow, (!) yet his moral reformation, if I have been rightly informed, was very decided; he became henceforth, it is stated, an honest man, and a respectable and useful member of the community. Although, *in a general way*, I profess but small faith in the alleged reformation of returned convicts and liberated criminals, yet, in this particular instance, I would fain believe that the change was a real and permanent one.

FINIS.

T. RICHARDS, 37, GREAT QUEEN STREET.

